



Porthcawl Rotary Club helps two local organisations (SEE PAGE 7).

## Bridgend & Porthcawl

# GEM



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THURSDAY, JANUARY 31ST, 2013



## Wales and the Six Nations

See pages 15 and 40

## Out and About with The GEM

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## Valentine's Day Dining: Pages 18 & 19

'GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAT HE LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS - BUT YOU WERE PREPARED TO DO THAT FOR A STRANGER'

# PORTHCAWL RNLI HEROES TO GET GALLANTRY MEDALS

TWO Welsh RNLI volunteers are to receive gallantry medals for their daring rescue of a woman in a swollen river.

The three members of the RNLI's Flood Rescue Team, including two volunteers from Porthcawl RNLI, have been recognised for their part in the rescue of a woman clinging to a branch in fast-flowing

flood waters in Umberleigh, Devon, on December 23, 2012.

It is the first time that RNLI volunteers have been awarded medals for a flood rescue.

Porthcawl RNLI's boat team leader Paul Eastment, 46, is to be awarded the RNLI Bronze Medal for Gallantry - one of the institution's highest accolades - for his courage, leadership and determination in extremely challenging

### Report by PHILIP IRWIN

conditions.

Helmsman Chris Missen, 25, who is also an RNLI volunteer at Porthcawl will also be awarded the Bronze Medal for Gallantry, as will crew member Martin Blaker-Rowe, 33, a volunteer from Chiswick Lifeboat Station.

Penarth RNLI volunteer Jason Dunlop, 40, who played a part in the rescue as a driver, will also be recognised with the 'Thanks of the Institution Inscribed on Vellum'.

As part of a shore crew team, Jason played a vital role in supporting the boat team throughout the incident, driving through flooded roads to the launch site and, once safely there, contributing to the difficult decisions the team had to make.

Vanessa Glover, 46, the woman rescued by the team, met Paul and Chris at the site of the

rescue and said: "I want to thank you for your bravery, courage, determination, professionalism and commendable quality of character."

"You embody the highest principles of selflessness I know: 'greater love hath no man that he lay down his life for his friends'."

"But you were prepared to do that for a stranger - and that stranger was me! In so doing you gave me the gift of life and the joy of knowing that Santa called on my son at Christmas."

"I will hold you in my heart forever. Thank you for saving my life."

The rescue took place in the early hours of December 23 at Umberleigh where the river Taw had reached 3.5 metres above its

normal range. Mrs Glover with Chris Missen (on left) and Paul Eastment.

Mother-of-one, Vanessa had been swept from her car after it was forced off a road by powerful flood water, leaving her husband and seven-year-old son clinging to the car roof.

She had managed to catch hold of a branch but a rescue helicopter was over an hour away and initial rescue attempts were unsuccessful. With no other options available, the RNLI's Flood Rescue Team decided to launch.

An RNLI spokesman said: "The situation was inherently dangerous: the team was unfamiliar with the area, it was dark, the flood waters were moving at 12 knots and carrying debris."

"A bridge a few hun-



dred metres downstream also posed a significant risk - anything, including a boat, could be sucked beneath it with the force of the water.

"If there was a mechanical failure, or if the engine was struck by debris, caught on an unseen hazard, or at worst the boat capsized, the consequences could be disastrous."

(Contd on page 17)

## COMPLEXIONS



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### VALENTINES SPECIAL for GEM readers

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## House burgled: POLICE APPEAL

POLICE are appealing for information, following a burglary at a house in Caer Cyffig between 9am and 5.30pm on Friday (January 25).

Among many items stolen was a large quantity of computer equipment, jewellery, a camera and cash.

Contact South Wales Police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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The Brynteg geography students who received awards from the Bridgend MP.

## BRYNTEG PUPILS IMPRESS LOCAL MP WITH CLIMATE CHANGE KNOWLEDGE

THE Bridgend MP, Madeleine Moon, was at Brynteg School recently to hand out awards.

She was there to present certificates for outstanding work by year-9 pupils in the geography department.

A school spokesperson said: "Pupils have studied causes, local and global effects and pos-

sible solutions to climate change. "For their assessment, they have written a letter to Madeleine Moon MP discussing why Bridgend should be taking better care of our environment, and why residents should live more sustainably.

"The presentation rewarded pupils who produced exemplary letters. The winners were given

the opportunity to hand their letter to Madeleine Moon, who agreed to deliver a talk on the actions that Bridgend is taking to protect the environment, and to develop sustainable industries and energy for the future."

The pupils then asked the MP questions about climate change and the role that Bridgend can play to become more sustain-

able. Mrs Moon commented: "I was delighted to present 21 geography pupils with a certificate for their excellent work on the subject of climate change. With over 300 pupils in the school hall, I was impressed with their knowledge and concern over the issues of climate change globally and locally, and their many questions in the Q &

A session were outstanding. " Steven Vicker, Brynteg geography teacher, said: "I feel it is very important for our young people to be given the opportunity to meet their local MP in order for them to understand their role within the community. "From a geographical point of view, Madeleine Moon allowed the pupils to appreciate and

learn about the issues of climate change in a different context.

"Feedback from our students was positive. By allowing the pupils to ask someone of Madeleine Moon's status about matters which they have studied in school, pupils gained a sense of importance and ownership for the protection of our local environment."

## Tree of Light provides a welcome boost for Samaritans in Bridgend

LAST Christmas, a tree decorated with hundreds of white lights was set up under the canopy of St Mary's Church on Ewenny Road.

The 'Tree of Light', was a point of focus for local people to remember a loved one, or a special cause.

Alongside the tree for all to read was a

board and throughout the Christmas period, it was updated constantly, as new names were added.

The Bridgend branch of the Samaritans was again one of the nominated charities that benefited from the appeal.

"We would like to thank the Bridgend Lions and those individuals who dedicated a light on the tree for

the generous donation of £750," said Christine Allen, director of the Bridgend branch of Samaritans.

She and John Osborne, chairman of the branch, were presented with the cheque by David Jones, president of Bridgend Lions.

Christine Allen explained: "This donation will go a long way to maintaining the services that the Bridgend branch of Samaritans provide to the people of Bridgend and the surrounding communities.

"The branch is also celebrating its 40th year of service in Bridgend in 2013.

"Samaritans is the only helpline available 24 hours a day, seven days a week offering support to anyone struggling to cope.

"Every penny raised helps to keep this vital service available."



ABOVE John Osborne, Christine Allen and David Jones.

### Pupils' Grimm trip!

A NATIONAL charity has given pupils from Pencoed Comprehensive School the chance to enjoy a trip to the theatre in Cardiff.

Happy Days children's charity has been established since 1992 and to date has provided holidays and special day trips for more than

135,000 children with special needs.

A group of 36 pupils, aged 11 - 16, go to Pencoed Comprehensive School and all suffer with moderate learning difficulties, ADHD, speech and language difficulties and Aspergers.

A spokeswoman for the charity said: "They come from a variety of backgrounds, some from

low income families which means they are unable to experience days out.

"We helped to fund a trip to see Grimm Tales at Sherman Cymru Theatre in Cardiff on January 28.

"The trips benefit the children in many different ways, including socially, behaviorally, educationally and helps to improve their self esteem.

The holidays and trips also give the children the gifts of happiness, excitement and hope."

She added: "We would love to hear from anyone who would like to apply to us for financial help for a similar project."

For more information on the Happy Days charity, go to www.happysdayscharity.org

### Bridgend Bridge results

RESULTS for Bridgend Bridge club on Friday, January 25:

North South - first, Sheila Storer and Dennis Smith; second, Bell Turner and Ann Fox; third, Liam Sheridan and Alan Williams.

East West - first, Marjorie Morris and Linda Pinnock; second, Alan Howells and Colin Lewis; third, Vida Halford and Glyn Williams.

There was no play on January 23, due to the snow.

In addition to the regular club nights on Wednesdays and Fridays at 7pm in Noltan Church Hall, to which all Bridge players are welcome, there

are lessons for people wishing to learn with Graham Jones on Fridays at 7pm.

To register an interest please contact Graham Jones on 01446 775952, Steve Burgoyne on 01656 661968, or David Newman on 01656 649138.

On Friday, February 1, also at Noltan Church Hall, at 2pm, there is a friendly session for inexperienced players, where help and guidance is on hand.

For further details, telephone 01656 649138.

DAVID NEWMAN

### Ode to a lost world

WELL, now we've had the 'BBC' (not the broadcaster - although another proven waste of public money!)

I'm talking about Blair, Brown and Cameron - could this country have fared worse? I doubt it.

Whatever happened to real people? I mean someone who actually worked for a living and wasn't born with a silver spoon in their mouth, and brainwashed by university into believing they can run a country when they couldn't run a toy train set - superbly educated, but no commonsense.

#### Urban bystander

I remember the fifties after the war, when almost everyone was poor. But what little they had, they shared, for there were always those who cared. Not many of them left today, they've either changed, or passed away. I remember green meadows, woods and countryside, the river we swam and fished in, deep and wide. That river now is no more than a stream, and the countryside gone, as if it were all a dream.

Now built up areas and tarmac roads provide housing for population overloads. Gone is the country I used to roam, and gone is the feeling, that was my home.

GEM reader  
Colin Dudley,

### HIGH TIDE TIMES (UNTIL FEBRUARY 7)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary. For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 - 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time	Ht	Time	Ht
	AM	M	PM	M
31 Thur	08.51	9.7	21.11	9.4
01 Fri	09.28	9.6	21.49	9.2
02 Sat	10.09	9.1	22.34	8.9
03 Sun	10.57	8.8	23.24	8.4
04 Mon	11.51	8.3		
05 Tues	00.31	7.9	13.07	7.8
06 Wed	02.00	7.9	14.39	8.0
07 Thur	03.19	8.3	16.03	8.5

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should always check with a tide table specific to their location.

### It's 'Bobble Day' for Age Cymru

AN unusual charity fundraiser takes place on Friday, February 8, in Porthcawl.

Members of the public can get involved in Age Cymru's 'Bobble Day' by buying an Age Cymru bobble badge and wearing their wackiest woolies to work or school on the day.

Age Cymru's director of income resources, Richard Nicholls, said: "Bobble Day is a UK-wide day of fun involving Age Cymru, our local partners across Wales, and our sister charities Age UK, Age Scotland and Age NI.

"Age Cymru has decided to mark Bobble Day 2013 by launching our very own green Welsh bobble.

"It has been inspired by our green hills, valleys and fields, as well as the large population of sheep that we have in

Wales. A quality product, the Welsh Bobble has been expertly woven from the finest man-made fibres for ease of cleaning and is resplendent in a very fetching and tasteful colour that we have called 'Bobble Green'.

"It's available - alongside a full range of purple, orange and yellow bobbles, from the Age Cymru shop in Porthcawl.

All money raised by Bobble Day will go towards supporting Age Cymru's 'Spread the Warmth' campaign to stop older people suffering and dying needlessly in winter and make winter a better time for older people.

For further information about Bobble Day, visit the website www.agecymru.org.uk/bobbleday.



# ILLEGAL GAS FITTER GETS SUSPENDED PRISON SENTENCE

**AN unregistered gas fitter has received a nine-month suspended prison sentence – for illegally carrying out sub-standard gas work at two chip shops in south Wales.**

Abergavenny Magistrates' Court heard that Richard Trezise, from Maesteg, installed a chip fryer at a fish bar in New Tredegar between July and September 2011, that was classed as 'immediately dangerous'.

Gas Safe inspectors found a number of safety defects with the gas appliance, including pipework being connected in a way that could have resulted in a serious gas leak if not rectified.

The Health and Safety Executive investigated and served Mr Trezise with a Prohibition Notice on December 12, 2011 preventing him from carrying out any further gas work until he was recognised by the Gas Safe Register.

However, in October 2012, a further complaint was received about Mr Trezise's work, this time in relation to the installation of a gas frying range at a fish bar in Penarth in the Vale.

An environmental health officer from Vale Council visited the premises and witnessed him working on the appliance.

The installation was inspected by a Gas Safe Register investigator and a number of deficiencies were found, leading to the equipment being classed as "at risk". Further investiga-

tion revealed that Trezise had never registered for Gas Safe Register membership.

Trezise, of Christopher Road, Maesteg, pleaded guilty to four charges under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and a single breach of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

He was given a nine-month prison sentence, suspended for two years, and was ordered to pay £1,500 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE Inspector Sara Joanne Carter, said: "Every year, there are fires, explosions and people are killed by carbon monoxide poisoning, as a direct result of gas appliances being improperly installed or maintained. In order to prevent such incidents, it is a fundamental requirement that anyone who works on gas appliances is competent to do so."

"The law requires both employers and the self-employed to register with the Gas Safe Register. Richard Trezise was neither a Gas Safe Registered engineer, nor had he undertaken any formal training or assessment."

"Because he had some experience in the manufacture of chip fryers, he believed he was competent. However, the serious safety deficiencies we identified with his work proves that wasn't the case. He was operating in an illegal and unsafe manner."

Further information about gas safety can be found online at [www.hse.gov.uk/gas](http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas).

## Man is jailed for four years after starting fire in flat

**RESIDENTS of a block of flats in Porthcawl had to be evacuated after a man set fire to one of the properties after a drinking session.**

Christopher Sayce, 29, who was responsible for starting the blaze, was spotted by fire-fighters opposite the flats drinking from a can of lager.

Cardiff Crown Court heard that Sayce was arrested shortly after and told the police: "Yeah, I set fire to the flat. My head has gone."

Sayce, of no fixed address, formerly of Alford Street, Maesteg, pleaded guilty to a charge of arson, being reckless as to whether life would be endangered, and was jailed for four years.

The court heard that he had a previous conviction for a similar offence in 2002 when he was sent to a young

by AJ  
SICLUNA

offender institution for two-and-a-half years which involved setting fire to his own flat, and causing extensive damage.

Prosecutor Tony Trigg said Sayce started the blaze on September 15 in a flat in New Road, Porthcawl. There were six flats above a shop and there were tenants in three of them who had to be evacuated.

One of the occupiers, Melvin Carter, had befriended Sayce because he had nowhere to stay. On the day in question, they went drinking and Mr Carter paid for Sayce.

They had a dispute and Sayce walked back to the flat and started fires in a bedroom, living room, and kitchen. He also put a chip pan on a cooker ring and turned it to maximum.

Mr Trigg said the fire

service was quickly on the scene but nevertheless the damage caused amounted to £38,955. Much of it was caused to the shop below.

Sayce was said to have other convictions for assault, and aggravated vehicle taking.

His counsel, Meirion Davies, said: "Alcohol abuse played a large part in his life."

"His problem has been impulsiveness and a lack of inhibition."

He said he had made admissions at the earliest possible opportunity. No alibi was used and at the time, he had taken alcohol and valium.

Mr Davies said: "Fortunately, the fire service was just around the corner and at one point he himself called them."

The court heard that on returning to the flat, Mr Carter himself tried to get inside, believing Sayce was still there.

Judge Eleri Rees said: "The motive was revenge because of a grievance against Mr Carter. You put at risk your own life and the lives of innocent people in their own homes."

## New unit is helping older people stay independent



**ABOVE: Left-right: Coun David Sage, Coun Mel Nott, Sarah Rochira, Janice Gregory AM, Mark Drakeford AM, the Mayor, Marlene Thomas, and Dr Ed Roberts.**

## Local volunteers support African children's charity



**• The Porthcawl volunteers 'snip, sew and pack!'**

**PRESIDENT Mary Emmment-Lewis and the members of Porthcawl Inner Wheel recently held a 'snip, sew and pack' afternoon at the home of overseas officer, Gill Edwards.**

The charity 'Mary's Meals', is the chosen Inner Wheel charity for Feeding Children in Africa. Every £1 donated feeds a school child for a year and back-packs, which are weighed and collected in England, are sent to the children via



Scotland. Porthcawl Inner Wheel also collects used postage stamps. The stamps, cut one inch all round, are also processed to raise funds for Inner Wheel charities.

children in the Third World. Porthcawl Inner Wheel is just a small part of a much larger organisation, and is always happy to support such charities.

**Mary Emmment-Lewis (President, Porthcawl Inner Wheel)**

**A NEW 'home from home' unit which helps older people return to independence after a stay in hospital has been officially opened in Bridgend.**

The Bryn-y-Cae Reablement Unit, based in a wing of the Bryn-y-Cae Residential Care Home, Brackla, has already helped 87 per cent of the people staying there to return to their own homes since it opened last year.

The joint initiative between Bridgend County Borough Council and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University (ABMU) health board means people coming out of hospital can get more intensive support with daily living than would be possible at home.

It's just one of the services provided by BCBC and ABMU's joint Community Resource Team (CRT) which aims to increase the number of people living at home independently, reduce hospital admissions and the need for on-going care, help people to leave hospital sooner, stop a deterioration in a person's physical condition, and reduce the number of placements in residential and nursing homes.

Officially opening the unit, Coun David Sage, deputy leader of BCBC Council, said: "We're very proud of Bryn-y-Cae Reablement Unit because it is providing outstanding support to help older people return to independence. "The development of this unit shows how committed we are as partners to supporting

our citizens when they need us most."

Dr Ed Roberts, vice-chair of ABMU, added: "The unit encompasses the commitment of ABMU Health Board and BCBC to joint working for the benefit of the citizens of the Bridgend area, helping people to become well enough to return to their own homes."

The event was attended by Sarah Rochira, Older People's Commissioner for Wales.

She commented: "Bryn-y-Cae is an example of what older people are asking for from public services – a little bit of help, delivered in a timely way, which will help keep them safe and shows them dignity and respect."

## PACT meetings

**BLAENGARW/PONTYCYMER PACT, Blaengarw RFC, February 4 at 6.30pm.**

**ABERKENFIG/PENYFAI PACT, Smyrna Chapel, February 4 at 7pm.**

**SARN/BRYNCOCH PACT, Sam Life Centre, February 4 at 7pm.**

**NEWTON PACT, Newton School Rooms, February 12 at 7pm.**

**LLANGELINOR PACT, Richard Price Centre, February 13 at 10am.**

**YNYSAWDRE PACT, Ynysawdre Village Hall, February 13 at 6pm.**

**NANTYMOEL/OGMORE VALE PACT, Horeb Chapel, Nantymoel, February 13 at 7pm.**

**CAERAU PACT, Noddfa Chapel, February 18 at 6pm.**

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# Youth theatre tackles The Who's classic rock opera!



ABOVE: Joe Wiltshire-Smith will play Tommy. (Photos by Mei Lewis of Mission Photographic).



ABOVE: Junior members rehearsing scenes featuring the young Tommy.

**ROCK fans of a certain age should start practising their Pete Townshend air guitar moves for later this month, when the Bridgend Youth Theatre puts on its latest production – the original 'rock opera' – Tommy.**

The award-winning theatre company aims to bring the story of Tommy to life at the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl, on three nights, February 21, 22 and 23.

The BAFTA award-winning *It's My Shout* Productions is now the creative brains behind Bridgend Youth Theatre (BYT), and actors, technicians and directors nurtured through their BBC Wales film project will be involved in the production.

Roger Burnell, who oversees both the BYT and *It's My Shout* will

by **PHILIP IRWIN**

direct the show, which will star Joe Wiltshire-Smith in the title role.

Anyone who can remember the 1970s will recall the day that The Who debuted 'Pinball Wizard' on Top of the Pops and, although that song is still the stand-out number, the show is full of other Who classics including 'Acid Queen', 'Sensation', 'I'm Free', 'See Me, Feel Me' and 'We're Not Going to Take it'.

At the closing ceremony for the London Olympics, The Who chose 'See Me, Feel Me' as one of the numbers.

When The GEM dropped in to see how rehearsals were going, it was obvious that the young cast were relishing the challenge of merging the excitement of a Who live show with a theatri-

cal story-telling evening. Roger Burnell said that the score was a complex piece that would test the young cast, but said he was pleased with how they were tackling the challenge.

The show features two narrators, Rebecca Lewis and Ceri-Anne Thomas, and Cate McHugh as Mrs Walker (Tommy's mother) and David Garner as Mr Walker.

Greg Sage plays Uncle Ernie, and Oat Jenner plays Cousin Kevin, while Hannah Dando plays the Acid Queen (renamed in the cast list as 'The Gypsy').

The show will be performed in the Grand Pavilion on February 21, 22, and 23 at 7.30pm, with a Saturday matinee at 2.30pm.

Tickets are on sale at the box office: 0165 815995, or online at [www.grandpavilion.co.uk](http://www.grandpavilion.co.uk)

## Who wants to build what and where?

Mr D Evans – 56 Ystad Celyn, Maesteg – demolish rear conservatory and construct new tiled roof sun room. Tenovus – 4 Talbot Street, Maesteg – vinyl covering to windows above shop fascia line.

Greggs Plc – Shoe Zone, 31 John Street, Porthcawl – internally illuminated fascia sign and projecting sign to front elevation.

Mr Roger Bridge – 8 Dock Street, Porthcawl – change of use from retail to walk-in taxi booking office for members of the public.

Pyle Community Council – Heathbridge Miners Square, Pisgah Street, Pyle – new seating area including rendered retaining wall, railings, paving and planting.

Mr A Davies – 142 Caerau Road, Maesteg – single storey bedroom extension for registered disabled person.

Neath Port Talbot CBC – land at Newlands Farm, Margam Village, Port Talbot – erection of 1 no. wind turbine (77m high to tip).

Mr Peter Lees – Woodlands, Derwen – Mansard roof to replace existing flat roof box.

Mr Gareth Goodridge – 87 Mill View Estate, Maesteg – 1.5 storey side extension.

Mr R Duncan – Thomas and Thomas Solicitors, 114 Commercial Street, Maesteg – single storey storeroom extension to rear.

Green Switch Solutions – Land north of Cefn Carfan Road, Heol Laethog, Bridgend – solar PV project.

C J Financial Services Ltd – 9

Tythegston Close, Porthcawl – Two storey and single storey extensions. Mr Marcus Davies – 21 Westfield Crescent, Porthcawl – single storey kitchen and sun lounge extension to rear.

Mrs M Thorne – The Rectory, Bettws Road, Bettws – outline application for dwelling in grounds of old rectory including access from Bettws Road.

Redrow Homes South Wales – Former Christie Tyler site, Abergarw Road, Brynmenyn – vary condition 1 of P10/20/OUT to omit flood flow paths from the approved masterplan.

Mrs J E Hughes – 7 Wildmill Lane, Bridgend – alterations and extension to existing property.

Greggs Plc – Shoe Zone, 31 John Street, Porthcawl – install new aluminium shop front and two air conditioning condensers with extract grille to rear.

Mr B Richards – Tyne House, Lawrence Close, Bridgend – remove limb and balance 1 x sycamore, crown lift and balance 1 x sycamore and remove mix of trees.

Mr H Jones – Minffrwd Stables, Minffrwd Road, Pencoed – change use of land for the stationing of caravans for residential purposes for 1 no. gypsy pitch.

BCBC Children's Directorate – Ynysawdre Comprehensive School, Heol yr Ysgol, Tondur – storage silo approximately 9.72m high and 3.4m in diameter to store wood pellets as a fuel source for the school biomass boiler.

PC Paul Evans, Hate Crime Officer from Bridgend Community Safety Partnership who is organising the event, said: "We are aware that members of our deaf community have fears and needs, this PACT is set up to engage with their local officers and address those fears and needs, so we are very happy to open the doors to the police service in this way."

## Deaf PACT meeting is arranged

**SOUTH WALES Police has teamed up with Bridgend Deaf Club to set up a series of Deaf PACT meetings in the town.**

The event will run the same way as any other PACT meeting, but a sign language expert from the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service will attend as an interpreter, giving attendees the chance to air their policing concerns.

For many, it will be the first time they are being given the chance to discuss things which concern them directly with an officer, or to get crime prevention advice.

PC Paul Evans, Hate Crime Officer from Bridgend Community Safety Partnership who is organising the event, said: "We are aware that members of our deaf community have fears and needs, this PACT is set up to engage with their local officers and address those fears and needs, so we are very happy to open the doors to the police service in this way."

"South Wales Police aims to be better at understanding and responding to the needs of all our communities."

"We want to seek a better understanding of what the deaf community may need from us and also share information about how we can help."

Deaf PACT meetings have been successful in other parts of South Wales such as in Pontypridd, where meetings regularly attract around 30 people.

PC Evans added: "If anyone knows of a profoundly deaf, signing person who could benefit from attending this meeting, would you be kind enough to share this message with them so that they will be aware of the opportunity

to take part in this meeting."

"South Wales Police will support victims of hate crime and take positive action to fully investigate any such issues."

"I would encourage witnesses or third person reporting of hate incidents or crimes to contact us on 101, or 999 in an emergency, so we can help the deaf community."

"A victim can also email the publicservicecentre@south-wales.pnn.police.uk to inform the police of an incident or crime themselves."

The Bridgend Deaf PACT meeting takes place at the Bridgend Deaf Club, on Tremains Road, on Tuesday, February 5, at 7.30pm.

There will be information on additional services for deaf customers offered by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC).

The aim is to create a

## WHEN AGATHA CHRISTIE CAME TO COLWINSTON

**COLWINSTON** (or Colwinstone as it was sometimes known) is a sleepy village four miles west of Cowbridge, or 3.9 miles southeast of Bridgend.

Also called Tregolwyn in Welsh, Colwinston lies in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The 12th Century Norman Church, dedicated to St Michael and All Angels (see article on page 28) contains memorials to the Thomas and Pritchard families, of Norman origin.

The church dates back to 1111, and was restored in 1879, according to a topographical dictionary of the Dominion of Wales, written by Nicholas Carlisle, who described it as 'the building ravaged by fire' in 1871.

According to a Diocesan report from 1809, the village status of Vicarial Tythes and Augmentation had a Benefice value of £111.18.0.

However, records from 1801 state that 235 residents dwelt within the parish. Around its churchyard, a distinct cross containing a pillar is probably from more ancient times.

By 1835, a Sion Presbyterian Chapel was built, and although not much is known about it, the chapel was converted into a dwelling in 1996.

In 1843, another place of worship, named the Ebenezer Baptist Chapel was established and finally completed by 1852. Its last minister was Rev A E Powell of Balarat in 1944.

Colwinston did not escape the perils of conflict, as Cromwell's Model Army from the Civil War are said to have plagued an area called the Golden Mile, a section of highway on the modern A48 road to Cardiff.

This is where the Army queued for a mile to receive golden coins, hence its name.

Although this is a logical explanation, the road could have received its name from a different conflict between two neighbours, Iestyn ap Cwrgan, Prince of Glamorgan, and Rhys ap Tewdwr.

The Golden Mile in this instance comes from the mile of golden coins given to Iestyn by the Norman Baron Fitzhamon, in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage.

Another interpretation of The Golden Mile involves a traveller who was ushering cattle to market in London. He decided to rest at this point in a shady spot and was alarmed to witness an old grey fox creeping towards him.

The fox spoke to the traveller, informing him that he was distressed with sorrow. As the traveller laughed

at this apparition, the fox became angry and said that he was Einon ap Collwyn, a traitor to the Welsh Army who fought with Norman Knights.

He had been cursed for his defection and would have to spend eternity in the form of a fox. Legend states that the Welsh believe the fox to be the 'devil's spy' who spreads bad luck across the land.

Colwinston acquired the name 'the Thankful Village' as it was declared as only one of 52 in the United Kingdom, and three in Wales. This is because there were no fatalities from both World War One and World War Two.

Agatha Christie was a welcome visitor to Pwllwyrach Manor House, close to the village. She had become aware of a tale of folklore involving a gypsy curse on one of the tracks. With her fascination for this mysterious tale, she based her book *The Hollow* on it. Her descendants are said to have remained in the area.

Legend maintains that the ruins of kennels at Pwllwyrach emanate eerie screams and cries at midnight on the first Monday in August each year.

These pitiful sounds are said to be from a huntsman who went on a drinking binge for many days, leaving his hounds unattended in the kennels, and doomed to starve. On his return, the angry hounds tore him to pieces.

To this day, ghostly mastiffs of hell howl and bay in union with the huntsman's cries around the ruinous kennels.

The mystifying bwgan is said to emanate around Crack Hill in the autumn twilight. It is reportedly a heavy force dragging innocent hiker's bodies down with weight and therefore reducing them to a slower pace of walking. Described as something or someone pressing heavily upon the back and shoulders, this strange sensation would be accompanied by a mysterious and unearthly shape, and described as a man from the Victorian era bellowing out the words 'O Lord, I pray Thee. Deliver me of this burden.'

This story of the 'Devil of the Crack' has since been passed down through the generations.

The sight of a quivering horse halted at the top of Crack Hill has been seen accompanied by a frightful bundle rolling down the hill, only to shatter in an explosion of light.

Could this frightful image be illusions of imagination, or just peculiar tales passed down through the depths of time?

But fact or fiction? It is up to you to decide...

Hayley Williams  
[hayley.williams550@yahoo.com](mailto:hayley.williams550@yahoo.com)

## Bridgend benefits from new Assembly poverty programme

**CAROL SARGEANT, the Minister for Local Government and the Communities, has announced further funding of £20.5m for 15 clusters as part of the Welsh Government's new Communities First Programme, including £4 million for Bridgend county borough.**

The funding has been earmarked for projects in Anglesey, Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Carmarthenshire, Conwy, Denbighshire, Newport, Pembrokeshire and Neath Port Talbot.

"community focused poverty programme" that supports the most vulnerable people in the most deprived areas of Wales.

Carl Sargeant said: "Each of the new clusters has a delivery plan that shows how the programme in that area will contribute to improved outcomes in relation to health, education and the economy."

"Community involvement will remain central to the programme. We want to see more local people becoming actively involved in Communities First and so each cluster has developed a Community Involvement Plan to ensure that this happens."

## Stars in their eyes at school

**EXPLODING rock-ets, flying space probes and Martian craters were just a few of the activities on offer last Wednesday at Bryntirion Comprehensive's extravaganza, 'A Night with the Stars'.**

Very messy and a lot of fun, staff and pupils of the school used everyday objects to help explain the mysteries of the universe to over 300 guests.

Bridgend Astronomy Society were ready with their telescopes but, sadly, the cloud cover did not allow for any star gazing that night.

This did not dampen spirits, however, as there was an array of cosmic activities, star-themed refreshments – and the highlight of the evening was the pop-up planetarium that took guests on a

tour of the night sky and fascinated everyone with amazing facts of the universe.

Two talks were held by Dr Chris North (one of the Sky At Night Team) who brought his infra red camera for people to enjoy and Jon Laver (from Bridgend Astronomy Society) who delighted us with 'What's out There?'

Everyone at Bryntirion Comprehensive School was very pleased to see so many people from the community and the surrounding schools braving the cold night to support the event.

Staff would like to thank Bryntirion PTA for funding the evening. All were counting their lucky stars the night wasn't cancelled due to snow!

WJ



## NO BORROWING WITHOUT A BUYER

# Council assurances on supermarket site are welcomed

**CONSERVATIVE** Regional AM Suzy Davies has welcomed assurances from Bridgend County Borough Council that no money will be borrowed to carry out work on the new supermarket site in Porthcawl until a buyer has been lined up.

### Regional AMs

**THE** Welsh Liberal Democrat AM for South Wales West, Peter Black, will be holding a surgery tomorrow, February 1, in Maesteg Library, from 2pm to 3pm. No appointment is necessary.

**SUZY DAVIES**, Welsh Conservative Assembly Member for South Wales West, will be holding an advice surgery on February 1, at 11am-1pm in Y Centre, John Street, Porthcawl.

The regional AM for South Wales West, had concerns about what the council was doing in the wake of Tesco's decision to withdraw from the scheme, which is a key element in the Porthcawl Regeneration Strategy.

She said: "I know that the council has now decided to borrow £4.7m to pay for the new roads, drains and other infrastructure needed, to service the land at Salt Lake where the supermarket is proposed.

"Although it was stated initially that this money would only be borrowed and the work commence once a new buyer for the site had been lined up, I was concerned about what was happening.

"As a result, I submitted a series of Freedom of Information requests. The council has now confirmed that it will only commit to borrowing the money needed for the highway works after it has secured a new store operator or developer.

"I welcome this assur-

ance. I would not be happy if the council borrowed this money ahead of securing a new developer because of the implications for council taxpayers.

"This £4.7 million is a large sum of money which the council is planning to spend and it will have to be recouped from the selling price of the land to the new developer.

"In addition, the council will have to raise enough money to satisfy the private partners who own or lease some of the land involved and also pay off the money they have borrowed to fund the harbour improvements.

"When all of this is taken into account, they will have to find a supermarket chain or developer capable of paying somewhere in the region of £11m for this site.

"It's a substantial sum and in my view, can only be provided by a major player. My worry is that if Tesco, the country's largest supermarket chain, could not make

the figures stack up, will the council be able to find another company prepared to invest this sum in Porthcawl?

"The council has obviously decided to press ahead with the supermarket element of the regeneration plan despite calls being made for it to go back to the drawing board.

"As Shadow Tourism Minister, I feel that building a run of the mill supermarket plus houses on the regeneration sites will do nothing to enhance Porthcawl's reputation as a top seaside resort.

"There has been a distinct lack of ambition in the proposals for Porthcawl regeneration. But the council appears to be wedded to its supermarket plan come what may, which is very disappointing."

A Bridgend County Borough Council spokesman said: "The £11 million figure suggested by the AM does not tally with our own calculations, which are significantly different."

## Co-op's year of fundraising for young carers launched



Staff are 'Rocking around the Clock' at the Co-operative store in Porthcawl.

**STAFF at the Co-operative food store in Porthcawl have launched a year of fundraising for their new charity of the year, 'Carers Trust'.**

The charity – which formed last year when The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads Care came together – will benefit from the Co-operative's staff, members and customers raising money to tackle feelings of isolation, and provide

desperately needed breaks, information, advice and support for 14-25 year-olds facing the challenges of caring.

For the launch, staff adopted a 'Rock Around the Clock' theme – an acknowledgement to the 24/7 nature of the challenges facing an estimated 500,000 young people, across the UK, who care for a family member or friend who are ill, frail, disabled or, have mental health or addiction problems.

Mark Jones, manager of the

Porthcawl store, said: "The challenge of unpaid caring is an often hidden issue, even though it can affect most families at some time.

"We're delighted that Carers Trust is our charity of the year, and that we have the chance to make a difference to the lives of young people in our communities, who undertake practical and emotional caring responsibilities for a family member or friend who cannot cope without their support."

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# Tractor Boys join up with vintage society for popular charity event

## PHOTOGRAPHS by GLYN EVANS

OTHER PICTURES ARE  
AVAILABLE FROM THIS EVENT.

Pictures can be purchased  
by contacting:

e-mail [ffotoimage@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ffotoimage@tiscali.co.uk)  
telephone 07791 228684.

Visit our studio in the Wool Barn,  
Verity's Court, Cowbridge.

THE Tractor Boys of Aberthin teamed up with the Glamorgan Iron Horse Society for a charity tractor run last Sunday (January 27).

It was a day when blue skies alternated with fierce hailstone showers, as the tractors met at Tondy, before travelling in convoy through Margam Park, Kenfig, and Porthcawl, before heading back to Tondy.



ABOVE: Hailstone showers were no joke for unprotected drivers!



**Dad has his  
head shaved  
– to raise  
cash for the  
Guide dogs!**



ABOVE: Carl Powles hair is starting to grow again since the head shave, but son Jak is quite prepared to cut it again!

**A BRIDGEND man  
had his head  
shaved for charity  
– and let a guide  
dog owner wield  
the razor!**

Carl Powles, of Herbert Street, had the hair-raising experience at the Star pub in Bridgend town centre.

His son Jak, 23, a guide dog owner whose sight was damaged in an accident in 2005, had the honour of making the initial cut.

Jak's mother, Maggie, said: "Carl had been growing his hair for a year before having it all shaved off. Jak started cutting it, then everyone in the pub had a turn."

The blade broke half way through but, luckily, a professional barber had brought his equip-

ment along to the event and finished the job properly with a cut-throat razor.

The event raised a total of £800 for Guide Dogs Cymru, with Carl's colleagues at heating and ventilation firm FP Hurley pledging £400 at their Christmas party.

Drinkers at the Star added £150 to the pot, and the rest was raised in sponsorship from Bridgend Ravens supporters, family and friends.

All have seen at first hand the vast difference guide dog Vance has made to Jak's life, giving him independence and mobility.

The pair carried the Olympic torch through Bridgend last May.

**Say Hello  
to Snoopy!**



HI! My name is Snoopy and I came into the Bridgend Adoption Centre as my owners couldn't look after me anymore.

I was kept in a cattery for a while, before I came into the centre, so I've been living in kennels for a while now. I am desperate for a home to call my own. I am an affectionate, cheeky lad. If you think you have the permanent home I am after, come and say hello.

Purrs,

**SNOOPY.**

Contact Cats Protection, Bridgend Adoption Centre, Pant Hirwaun, Bryncethin, Bridgend, CF32 9UJ; telephone 01656 726 621, email [bridgend.manager@cats.org.uk](mailto:bridgend.manager@cats.org.uk).

## Chess round-up

**BRIDGEND'S team managed to draw 2.5-all with Caerphilly in East Glamorgan's Chess league Division 2.**

In a hard fought match Caerphilly gained the upper hand by drawing the top three boards and then winning on board 4, leaving it all down to board 5 to clinch the win.

They needed only to draw, but aggressive play by Robert Rees against Dwain Jones on board 5

secured the win, saving Bridgend from defeat.

Though Bridgend are still top of the second division with 31.5 points, a lead of 1.5 over second-placed Barry Camelots on 30 points, the Camelots have two games in hand and should regain the lead in division two.

For further information on Bridgend chess club visit [www.bridgend-chessclub.co.uk](http://www.bridgend-chessclub.co.uk).

MK

**Did you know you can  
read your GEM online?  
[bridgend-today.co.uk](http://bridgend-today.co.uk)**



## Pancake runners

PORHCRAWL Town Council is marking Shrove Tuesday this year by organising a pancake race on the preceding Sunday (February 10) on Nottage Green at 12.15pm.

Entries are invited from teams of four (£10 per team), with proceeds going to the Mayor of Porthcawl's Civic charity fund. A town council spokeswoman said: "Just bring along a frying pan and we will supply the pancakes!"

Entry forms are available from the town council office, 24 Victoria Avenue, Porthcawl; telephone 01656 782215.

## Porthcawl Rotary donates equipment to two local groups



ABOVE:  
The party from  
Porthcawl Rotary  
at the  
Trinity Care and  
Support Group.

THE Rotary Club of Porthcawl recently presented two local charities with IT equipment.

Ty Elis Counselling Services received an £800 gift of a laptop package, whiteboard and

stapler, jointly funded by Porthcawl Rotary Club and Rotary District 1150.

The chairman of Ty Elis, Dr David Parry and director Edwina White MBE received the items on behalf of the charity.

An external hard drive was also presented to the Trinity Care and Support Group, Porthcawl, for its computer.

Project leader Jackie Graham showed Porthcawl Rotary president Ken Roberts, and Jean Schofield and Rowena Millward, around the premises and explained just how useful the equipment would be to her.

Both the personnel of Ty Elis and Trinity Care and Support Group expressed their thanks to the Rotary Club of Porthcawl for being a firm supporter of their organisations. IW

## WHAT'S ON

### in brief LLANHARRY SURGERY

Tomorrow (Friday, February 1), Huw Irranca-Davies MP for Ogmore, will be holding a street surgery in Llanharry between 1pm and 3pm; followed by a drop-in surgery at Worgan's Cafe, Ty-Isaf, Llanharry, 3pm-4pm.

### PEACE FORUM

THE Rotary Club of Bridgend is holding a peace forum at the Sony Theatre, Bridgend College, on Friday, February 8, at 2.30pm.

'Question Time' will be hosted by broadcaster and writer Roy Noble. Panel members are Madeleine Moon MP, Peter Black AM, Rt Rev David Wilbourne (Assistant Bishop of Llandaff) and Dr Nigel Coombs (headteacher of Bryntirion Junior School).

The event is being held to emphasise Rotary International president Sakuji Tanaka's theme for this year - 'Peace Through Service.'

For details, contact Bridgend Rotary president Mike Lewis, on 10656 660648, 07951300206, or mike@laleston.org.uk.

## Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D759.

● £2,000: 507763.

● The rollover, which now stands at £6,500, was not won this week.

● £10: 6 2 0 3 1 0, 597083, 392559, 811533, 315621, 378207, 265240, 900089, 362992, 307809, 803136, 880627, 357930, 885571, 492240, 677532, 977694, 606135, 885159, 549764.

● £5: 746206, 586210, 709152, 752812, 323347, 558295, 360589, 568572, 269962, 773529,

142718, 454776, 409633, 663304, 682384, 898866, 417942, 744224, 676768, 721236, 507443, 811799, 391509, 228568, 618783, 829189, 317084, 473940, 732265, 804297, 112735, 320137, 967899, 378452, 697617, 290612, 534687, 294603, 851583, 778785, 273125, 429531, 505640, 728878, 209876, 127973, 147270, 153290, 195430, 469267, 626943, 133296, 946240, 650642, 513712, 595098, 376184, 193143, 131223, 364656.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above.

For lottery information, please telephone 029 2053 2300.

## Twinning meeting

PENCOED Town and District Twinning Association's AGM will be held on Friday, February 22, at 7.30pm in Pencoed Welfare Hall.

All members of the public who have an interest in town twinning are invited to attend a public meeting, beforehand, but the AGM is open to members only.

For further information, contact Wendy McDonald, chairman, on 01656 865633, email: eric.mcdonald012@btinternet.com

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# YOUR CHANCE TO SHARE THE COMMUNITY NEWS

## Maesteg concert

**MAESTEG** hall is the venue for the annual concert of Cŵr Meibion Maesteg a'r Cylch (Maesteg and District male choir) on Saturday, February 16 at 7pm under musical director Rhian Jenkins and accompanist Ryan Wood.

One of the guest artists, Angharad Lisabeth Rees (pictured far right), is a highly-experienced, classically-trained soprano from Pontrhydyfen, a little village made famous as the birthplace of Richard Burton, Ivor Emmanuel and Rebecca Evans.

Angharad started singing when she was just five years old and at the age of eight, had singing lessons with the late Madam Myra Rees, of Loughor, Swansea.

By the age of 12, Angharad knew she wanted to pursue a professional singing career and went on to study with internationally-

renowned soprano – Patricia O'Neill, and to this day still continues to study under her expertise.

Angharad has won many awards, including the Urdd national eisteddfod, the Welsh National Eisteddfod and Llangollen international eisteddfod. She was also one of the youngest students to be accepted into the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama in Cardiff, at the age of 17; where she completed a BA honours degree in music.

The highlight of her career came in 2008 when she won the prestigious W Towyn Roberts Scholarship at the Welsh National Eisteddfod in Cardiff, and in 2009 became a member of the Gorsedd of Bards.

In March last year, she was asked to be an adjudicator at the Urdd eisteddfod, and also a judge at the Welsh Factor competition. In the summer, Angharad appeared as Cunedde in the Operetta

*Candide*. She has also been busy in the recording studio, recording tracks for her forthcoming album.

Tickets can be obtained from any choir member, Llangynwyd post office or telephone 01656 735305.

## Bus service

**AFTER** a long campaign by Ynysawdre Elderly Residents Association, First Cymru has improved the service through Ynysawdre with a half-hourly service, instead of the previous hourly service.

Not only has the service been improved to Bridgend town, but every other bus now passes the Princess of Wales hospital – the issue residents were most concerned about.

**Fly tipping BECAUSE** of the recent bad weather, I had been taking my dogs for a walk in Pandy Park, and noticed that irresponsible individuals had been dumping old vehicle tyres along the river bank.

For years, the river had been contaminated and it is only in the last few years that the water has cleared and one can see trout, white throated dippers and crested grebe in this section of water.

I informed Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) last Thursday about these tyres, and its officials are to be congratulated, as on Friday I saw two

## NORTH BRIDGEND NEWS

A message for all readers in the north of Bridgend who would like to have items included in the community news columns of The GEM:

If you wish to submit reports on any social activity in this region, please contact me.

I am very approachable and will endeavour to include every newsworthy subject.

Contact details: **CLIVE MITCHELL**

1 Tyn-Y-Coed Close, Sarn, Bridgend CF32 9NQ

TEL: 01656 725399

email: tynycod1@yahoo.co.uk



workmen arrive in a lorry. They scoured the river bank and removed 21 old tyres from this section of the river.

**Litter clean-up** **YNYSAWDRE** Environmental Group will be meeting on Sunday, February 2, to clear litter along the riverbank close to Brynnmyn level crossing.

Volunteers are welcome to join the group near the Fox and Hounds pub, 10am–12noon.

Projects have been undertaken by volunteers from sections of the community including members from Ynysawdre elderly residents association, Ynysawdre Community Council and Garw Valley angling club, with clean-up operations supervised by Brian Jones of Keep Wales Tidy.

## Trust

### concert

**ST John's Trust** is organising a concert in the Sony Theatre, Bridgend College, on February 1, starting at

7pm, when among those taking part will be Oldcastle Junior School Choir, Bridgend Male Choir under its new musical director Rhianon Williams-Hale, and the Vocelle ladies choir.

The trust has been set up to try to save the historic building on Newcastle Hill known as St John's Hospice. It is regarded by many people as the finest preserved mediaeval town house in south Wales, believed to date from around 1425 AD.

Admission will be £5, and tickets are available on 01656 658783, or at the door.

**Hall meeting** **YNYSAWDRE** village hall, which has been renamed, was originally the Ynysawdre community centre.

The elderly residents association meets monthly at the hall and

is holding its next meeting on February 13, 10.30am–12noon.

It will be open to residents interested in the progress of the building of the new 'Gateway to the Valleys' comprehensive school in Ynysawdre.

Present will be officials from BCBC and the main contractor, Leadbitter Construction, to answer questions.

## Carers' centre

**BRIDGEND** Carers' Centre is located in 87, Park Street, Bridgend, CF31 4AZ (telephone 01656 658479).

On February 2, the centre will be open between 10.30am–12.30pm, to provide information and support to carers trying to juggle work and caring responsibilities.

On February 4, 11, 18 and 25 there will be the book Cwtch,



ABOVE: Angharad Lisabeth Rees.

1pm–2pm, with the opportunity to practise reading aloud.

On February 5, the outreach group will be available at the Princess of Wales hospital, 10am–12noon.

In the afternoon, carers of their parents are welcome to chat with the staff.

On February 6, the Community Café will be open between 12.30pm–3.30pm. Carers with others

On February 7, 10am–12noon, the outreach group will be at

Trinity church hall, Porthcawl.

On February 7, 14, 21 and 28, 10am–12.30pm, there will be a continuation of the course titled 'Looking after me' which will teach carers relaxation techniques, anger management, managing their own health etc.

Also on February 7, 1pm–2pm, carers can enjoy the body blitz session with Darja stretching and toning exercises.

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[www.scottwroe-hearingcentre.co.uk](http://www.scottwroe-hearingcentre.co.uk)

## Heart Roadshow encourages debate on organ donation

**ON** Wednesday, January 30, the Welsh Government's Heart to Heart roadshow will visit Bridgend as part of its tour of Wales to raise awareness about organ donation among members of the public.

The roadshow, launched on Santes Dwyntwen Day, the patron saint of Welsh lovers, will visit each local health board area in Wales before finishing its journey in Barry on St Valentine's Day.

In Bridgend county borough, 28.99 per cent of people have already signed the NHS Organ Donor Register, which is slightly lower than the overall Wales figure of 31.41 per cent (NHSBT 2011 figures).

The Heart to Heart roadshow is part of the Welsh Government's Heart to Heart campaign, which is encouraging people to get talking about organ donation, and whether for or

against, make their wishes known to family and friends.

There's no need to make an appointment; people can simply drop in while out and about.

If in favour of organ donation, visitors will be encouraged to sign up to the NHS Organ Donor Register and to have a conversation with their loved ones to make them aware of their decision.

The roadshow in Bridgend will be on January 30 from 1pm–5pm at Sainsbury's, Sarn (CF2 9SH).

A Welsh Government Bill to change the system of consent to deceased organ donation in Wales from the current opt in system to a soft-opt out was laid before the National Assembly for Wales in December 2012. Under the new proposed system, people will still be able to register a wish to be an organ donor, or they can register a wish not to be a donor.

The roadshow will be in Barry on February 14 from 1pm–5pm at Morrisons (CF63 4BA).

# LOOK!

We are having a

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# GEM photographer captures some Christmas card moments as snow blankets the borough



Coity Castle.



Llanfrynach Church.

## PHOTOGRAPHS by GLYN EVANS

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THE snow was followed by rain, and then by hail – and then by more rain, but when it was here, some areas of Bridgend county borough were transformed.

Among the places Glyn Evans visited (or tried to visit) was the Bwlch mountain road, which was closed for several days by the heavy snows.



ABOVE and RIGHT:  
Looking out over the Bwlch.

BELOW: The road was closed at Nantymoel.



Lewistown in the snow.



Cows on the move in Pantyrawel.



ABOVE: Coity Church.



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## SCHOOL PUPILS PLANNING A SUPERSTAR PERFORMANCE

**RIGHT:** The students in rehearsal for the production of *Jesus Christ, Superstar*.

**POR TH CAWL** Comprehensive is getting set to perform *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl, over four nights, from February 6-9.

"It will be the school's 35th production and in time-honoured fashion will continue to showcase the extraordinary talent of pupils, and the school's tradition for excellence in musical theatre," said headteacher Andrew Slade.

"Our school show is the ultimate team effort involving not only the drama and music

departments, but also our art, technology, textiles and support staff departments – not forgetting the important roles many of our pupils play 'behind the scenes.'

"I must also thank those organisations who help us to continue our show tradition with their generous sponsorship, advertising and donations.

"This is all the more appreciated in the harsh financial climate in which we find ourselves."

Tickets from £6, can be purchased on-line at [www.grandpavilion.co.uk](http://www.grandpavilion.co.uk) or by telephoning 01656 815995.



## Local young critics join judging panel

**YOUNG** people were on the judging panel for the first 'Theatre Critics of Wales' awards at the Sherman Cymru in Cardiff – for the best productions and artists in a variety of categories, including opera, theatre, drama and dance.

The local youngsters earned their position alongside professional theatre critics on the awards' judging panel through honing their critiquing skills, as part of the young critics scheme, which is co-ordinated by Bridgend County Borough Council's arts and community development team.

The scheme helps aspiring arts critics, aged between 12 and 25, to share their views about arts events in Wales, with industry professionals encouraging them to write a number of theatrical and musical reviews.

BCBC cabinet member for wellbeing, Coun Lyn Morgan, said: "The young critics did a great job transforming their idea of holding the awards into a reality.

"Being on the judging panel is a huge boost to their experience.

"Everyone on the scheme has worked hard to improve their skills and having their views heard and valued on a national level at the awards is testament to how far they've all come."

## Passmores secures a top quality accolade

**FOLLOWING** a rigorous assessment, Passmores in Barry has secured the national Law Society's law management quality mark, Lexcel, developed specifically for the legal profession.

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Miss Carli Evans, Partner, said: "While we are proud to have secured Lexcel, it is our clients and staff who are the main beneficiaries.

"They can be assured that the way we manage the practice has their interests at heart and runs it efficiently.

"There is a lot of choice in the legal services market, but being Lexcel accredited demonstrates our commitment to client care and best practice."

Lucy Scott-Moncrieff, president of the Law Society of England and Wales said: "Achieving Lexcel accreditation proves a serious commitment to the continual development of the practice's

management standards. Practices opt to undertake the rigorous application and assessment process for the optional scheme to help demonstrate their investment in their business."

Passmores joins more than 1,000 other legal practices in England and Wales with Lexcel accreditation. The practice management acco-

lade has also gone international, with firms in Scotland, Poland and the Republic of Ireland having gained accreditation.

Passmores Solicitors are based at 21 Tynwydd Road, Barry, CF62 8HB; telephone 01446 721000, fax 01446 746949; website [www.passmores.com](http://www.passmores.com); email [mail@passmores.com](mailto:mail@passmores.com).



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## Libraries join in the Jane Austen celebration fest!

**LIBRARIES** across Bridgend county borough are marking the 200-year anniversary of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* with displays of books, DVDs, CDs and other materials.

For anyone wanting to rekindle an old romance with Mr Darcy, or to read the novel for the first time, the book is available in a variety of formats at the local library.

The book can also be borrowed in eBook and e-audiobook formats, available to download at home.

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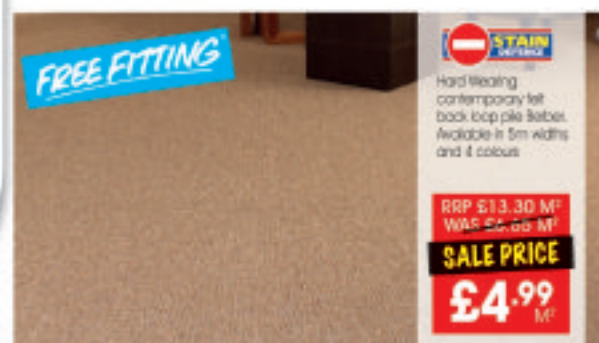
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# SIX NATIONS RUGBY

## 2013 FIXTURES



### CAN ROBERT HOWLEY'S MEN RAISE THE NATION YET AGAIN?

# Injury-hit Wales out to overcome the odds and grab fourth Grand Slam

**T**HE defending title-holders, Wales, kick off the 14th Six Nations international rugby championship against Ireland at the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff, this Saturday (February 2) in search of a fourth

by **DON JOHN**

Grand Slam in the space of nine years.

In 2005, under then head coach Mike Ruddock, the Dragon suddenly emerged blinking from its cave, after long, dark years in exile, to sweep away Six Nations rivals with an exhilarating brand of running rugby, Wales

becoming the first country to claim the Grand Slam title while playing more games away than at home.

In 2008, a more defence-minded Welsh team did it again, this time under their newly-installed coach, former All Black hooker, Warren Gatland, conceding only two tries in the process.

Last year, they made it three wins in an absorbing, nail-biting tournament. They triumphed over the eventual runners-up England in a Twickenham cliff-hanger, thanks to a game-changing, individual try by centre Scott Williams.

Just as this year, the opening fixture was against the Irish, who were narrowly overcome in Dublin (23-21); and Wales then defeated Scotland in Cardiff (27-13); England (19-12 for a 20th Triple Crown); Italy (24-3); and finally France (16-9) amid ecstatic scenes in a sell-out Millennium Stadium.

While there were those who questioned the overall standard displayed in the 2012



Picture courtesy of the Huw Evans Agency.

*Jubilant, as Welsh players celebrate another touchdown from last year's winning encounter with the Irish – will their arms be raised aloft again this Saturday?*

tournament, it was certainly packed with plenty of drama and some genuinely memorable moments, apart from that Williams solo effort at a stunned 'Twickers'.

Who can forget arguably the try of the championship, when big Welsh wing George North powered through flailing Irish defenders, before deftly slipping a delicate, one-handed back-of-the-hand pass for centre Jonathan Davies to scythe through at the posts?

The proud men in green from the Emerald Isle will be out to avenge that narrow defeat come 1.30pm on Saturday, and disprove suggestions, after last year's humiliating defeat by England, that their ageing warriors were nearing the end of the road.

Like the Welsh, though to a lesser extent, their preparations have been hampered by the absence of injured key personnel, but they will be buoyed by the Irish provinces' success in Europe, which starkly contrasts with the four under-performing

Welsh regions, who were all eliminated early from the Heineken Cup competition.

Interim head coach, Robert Howley, who has taken on Gatland's mantle while the Kiwi is on secondment with the British & Irish Lions, will be hoping there will be no negative fall-out on Six Nations morale among his injury-hit squad, which initially contained five uncapped players, bidding to pull on the red shirt.

Both Welsh and Irish camps will need to be wary of the threat posed by a fast-rebuilding England side, still basking in their shock victory over world champs New Zealand, and harbouring Grand Slam hopes of their own.

Not forgetting, of course, the always unpredictable French, who denied Wales a deserved Rugby World Cup final place Down Under when Sam Warburton was controversially shown the red card. All three nations are eminently capable of taking the honours in what is

already shaping up to be a tightly-fought tournament with no clear favourite to claim the holy grail of northern hemisphere rugby.

Scotland, after the shock departure of their head coach, Andy Robinson, and his replacement by Wales assistant coach, Scott Johnson, will be concerned to avoid the invidious 'wooden spoon' again – while rapidly-improving Italy will be setting a trap for the unwary and hoping for one or two big scalps.

All in all, then, a particularly intriguing contest is in prospect, with all the home players fully aware that this time there is much more than a coveted Six Nations crown at stake.

The watchful Warren Gatland will be standing silently on the sidelines studying form for places on the plane when the Lions' tour party flies off to Australia in the summer... So, let battle commence!

• See Back Page Comment

### SIX NATIONS SCHEDULE 2013

February 2:  
WALES v Ireland, 1.30pm and  
England v Scotland, 4pm

February 3:  
Italy v France, 3pm

February 9:  
Scotland v Italy, 2.30pm and  
France v WALES, 5pm

February 10:  
Ireland v England, 3pm

February 23:  
Italy v WALES, 2.30pm and  
England v France, 5pm

February 24:  
Scotland v Ireland, 2pm

March 9:  
Scotland v WALES, 2.30pm  
and Ireland v France, 5pm

March 10:  
England v Italy, 3pm

March 16:  
Italy v Ireland, 2.30pm,  
WALES v England, 5pm and  
France v Scotland, 8pm

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### SIX NATIONS



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# Out and About with The GEM

## Presidential biopic all talk, but still hugely engaging

**MAKING** a biopic of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of America, has long been a passion project of Steven Spielberg, who originally had Liam Neeson in mind to bring 'Honest Abe' to life for him.

Schedule conflicts prevented the pair from achieving this; however, Spielberg called upon the not inconsiderable talents of Daniel Day-Lewis to fill the Neeson-size space, and their collaboration, called *Lincoln*, has now reached cinemas.

The film covers the final few months of his life, as Lincoln attempts to pass the 13th amend-

ment to the constitution which will see slaves emancipated.

However, it is a task that sees opposition come from all quarters while he must also deal with struggles in his private life, specifically his wife Mary (Sally Field) and son Robert (Joseph Gordon-Levitt)...

As much as Abraham Lincoln is revered as one of the most influential political figures in American history, so Steven Spielberg is revered as one of the most influential forces in American cinema.

That the two would go together is almost certainly fate – and much as you would expect, the end result is that *Lincoln* is a top-quality film that, while placing the emphasis on talk rather than action,



by GARETH JAMIESON  
Follow Screen Talk on Twitter - @GEMScreenTalk

makes for a hugely engaging experience.

As Aaron Sorkin has shown, politicians debating the where's and why's over a table doesn't have to be the stuff of boredom, but unless there is real meat and engaging characters, it means nothing. *Lincoln* lacks in neither, making this something of a curio for Steven Spielberg.

Certainly, his hallmarks are present – a noble hero fighting the good fight, saccharine moments that other directors would be pilloried for, and father-son relationships that are the right side of 'troubled', but visually it is his most muted film for a while.

It is to the film's benefit, however, as – given the amount of dialogue and exposition, the focus needs to remain wholly on the story and charac-

ters, and Spielberg zeroes in on this beautifully – showing the true cost of constructing a legacy and the emotional and physical toll it takes, not just on those at the eye of change, but those around them as well.

Tony Kushner's script is well matched to the director, its focus on the most important period of Lincoln's presidency giving the film a thrust and dynamic a more expansive biopic would struggle to match, and he boils down the political skulduggery and machinations into an engaging screenplay.

While he shows that Abe was more than willing to bend the rules to suit him, Kushner still paints him as a saintly character, intriguing moments such as his fractious familial relationships underwritten where there should have been more.

As you might expect, Daniel Day-Lewis' central performance is mighty and powerful – anchoring the film and giving a superbly rounded performance that should almost certainly see him land the hat-trick of Best Actor Academy Awards next month.

Seeking the man behind the myth, Day-Lewis finds him and offers a mesmerising turn, equally matched by a cast that is as good onscreen as it is on paper. Sally Field shadows Day-Lewis well as

his wife Mary; Tommy Lee Jones makes use of his cantankerous persona as the firebrand Thaddeus Stevens; and David Strathairn is reliably wonderful as William Seward.

With small roles for the likes of Joseph Gordon-Levitt (underwritten sadly), John Hawkes, James Spader and Hal Holbrook, this is a sensational cast that delivers the goods.

The only minuses lie in the fact that it often becomes a little too heavy-going at times, with a good knowledge of the background of the period more than useful, while Spielberg's tendency to use schmalz prevents the film digging deeper into darker territory. However, if you enjoy political history, then *Lincoln* will make for a hugely engaging watch.

**VERDICT:** Weighty and with the emphasis on discourse rather than action, *Lincoln* is a heavy-going biopic that is marshalled with skill by Steven Spielberg and led by an astounding performance by Daniel Day-Lewis.

Its emphasis on talking heads may not appeal to all, but it is certainly an immersive and engaging experience. *Recommended.*

**SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED:** *Nixon* (1995), *Amistad* (1997), *Glory* (1989).

## Vale author's book launch in London

**ELIZABETH GLANVILLE**, originally from the Vale, will be launching her first novel, *The Imaginist*, with fellow novelist Fiona McCready – author of *Patchwork* – in Camden on February 21 at Collective Pop Up.

Elizabeth grew up in Peterston-super-Ely, where she attended the local primary school before moving on to Bishop of Llandaff High School, and then Cambridge University.

As an undergraduate student, Elizabeth worked in The Sportsmans' Rest and The Three Horse Shoes in Peterston.

She also worked as a playworker in the after school club at Peterston School, and on the



Vale's summer playscheme in Barry and Llantwit Major.

She now lives in London, but her family is based in Pendoylan.

She spent the past three years working on *The Imaginist*, alongside teaching and working towards an MA in psychotherapy and counselling.

*The Imaginist*, which was long listed for the inaugural Sony Reader Award in collaboration

with The Dylan Thomas Prize, tells the story of Louise, who moves to London in search of the long coveted young professional lifestyle, but finds the cold realities of real life harsher than she ever imagined.

Elizabeth (28) said: "I started writing novels nearly five years ago, so to finally have *The Imaginist* in print is just incredible."

"Although the launch is in London, I would love to bring *The Imaginist* home and do a signing in the Vale as well, and this is something I will be looking into for later in the year."

The launch event will be held at Collective Pop Up, 4 Crowndale Road, London, NW1 1TT, which is located a few minutes walk from Mornington Crescent station, five minutes from Camden Town.

## WHAT'S ON AND WHERE AROUND THE LOCAL AREA

### Local history

**meeting COWBRIDGE and District Local History Society's next lecture will be on Friday, February 1, at 7.30pm in the Lesser Hall of the Town Hall, Cowbridge.**

The subject will be the 'History of the Mumbles Lifeboat' by Sid Wilkins (a former lifeboatman). All are welcome!

### Church crafts

**A previously postponed craft fayre at St Mary's Church, Barry, will be held this coming Saturday (February 2) at 10.30am.**

Following the Christmas tree festival, which was visited by hundreds of schoolchildren just before Christmas, a donation of £300 was made to Ty Hapus.

### Toys and trains

**BARRY toy and train sale will take place on Sunday, February 3, 10.30am to 3pm in Barry Leisure Centre, Greenwood Street.**

The Barry show has 80 tables and is attended by stallholders from all over Wales, as well as England.

Organiser Chris Dyer said: "The traders are keen to offer the best possible stock but also at the best possible prices and value-for-money will always be the keynote."

For information, telephone 01643 702757, 07966 694579 or go to website [www.chrisdyer-fairs.co.uk](http://www.chrisdyer-fairs.co.uk).

### TOP help

**TAX HELP for Older People (TOP) will hold an income tax surgery at Roz Couzen's Chiropody Surgery, Unit 4, Commercial Street, Llantwit Major, CF61 1RB from 10am until midday on February 4.**

Future tax surgeries will then be held there on the first Monday in each month. No appointment is necessary.

To call TOP's helpline, telephone 0845 601 3321 or 01308 488066. Home visits can be arranged for people unable to attend the surgery.

### Llantwit concert

**THE Cowbridge U3A**

**live music group presents a concert of music with a spring theme, on February 6 at 2.30pm.**

It features Anne Wilkins (soprano), James Barton (violin) and Jeanette Massocchi (piano) with music by Beethoven, Handel, etc.

The concert venue is at Bethel Chapel, Commercial Street, Llantwit Major, and all are welcome; no ticket required.

### Family album

**ON February 7, Cowbridge Art Society will welcome Neath artist Paul Rees, who will give a presentation of his work and demonstrate making paintings from the family album; this is a change to the advertised programme.**

The society meets on Thursday evenings at the Old Hall, Cowbridge, 7pm-9pm. Visitors welcome.

For full programme, see [www.cowbridgeartsociety.com](http://www.cowbridgeartsociety.com)

### Charity function

**LLANTWIT MAJOR Rugby Football Club is holding a meal night in aid of Tenovus, with guest speaker and a question and answer session on Thursday, March 14, before the Wales v England Six Nations match.**

Appearing during the evening are *Scrum V's* Phil Steele, former Wales union and league international Adrian Hadley, and Ospreys Rhys Webb and Matthew Morgan.

Tickets £15, can be booked at the clubhouse after 4pm on 01446 702276, alternatively

call 07900 020152.

### Pothole fillers at the ready!

**WITH the recent snow, ice and flooding across the Vale creating a huge new batch of potholes across the county, the BIG Fill team rolled into Baruc ward last weekend to begin phase 2 of the Vale Council's campaign, filling 129m<sup>2</sup> of potholes in just one day, using 12.5 tonnes of tarmac.**

This weekend, the team will be in Gibbonsdown, and the following weekend, February 9 and 10, the team is heading to Llantwit Major.

### Talks on CS Lewis

**AUTHOR CS Lewis, best known for his Narnia series of children's books, was also a prolific writer on Christianity.**

To mark the 50th anniversary of his death, Rev Dr Mark Dimond of All Saints church, Penarth, is hosting a Lent talk and discussion series based on Lewis' Christian writings.

The four talks begin on February 20 on the gallery inside All Saints, with sessions at either 12pm-2pm (bring packed lunch) or 7.30pm-9pm.

Topics are as follows: February 20, 'Pain'; February 27, 'Joy'; March 6, 'Salvation'; March 13, 'Love'.

Admission is free, with tea and coffee available. All are welcome.

For more information, visit [www.all-saintspenarth.org.uk](http://www.all-saintspenarth.org.uk)

## Vale hedge trimming competition

**The Glamorgan Ploughing and Hedging Society will be holding its annual tractor and mechanical hedge trimming competition on Sunday, February 17, at Ty Draw Farm, St Athan, at 10.30am, by permission of Mr David Lowe.**

The winner will receive the Perpetual Nigel Sullivan Shield and there will be cash prizes for places.

The society will hold its annual ploughing

match on Sunday, September 8, at Gileston Farm, St Athan, by kind permission of RM Thomas and Son.

The Fergusson Club, which has worldwide membership, will be using the event to stage the European Fergusson T20 Championship to commemorate the life of the late Harry Fergusson, who designed the 'Little Grey Ferry' in 1935; in 1956, production went over to the Massey Fergusson 35 tractor.

More information from the chairman, Andrew Studley on 01446 781229.

## Bobath gala concert perfect Valentine's gift

**BOBATH children's therapy centre is celebrating its 21st birthday this year with a gala concert at St David's Hall, Cardiff on March 17.**

"With songs from the shows as well as comedy and dancing, this variety concert really does have something for everyone and would be make a perfect Mother's Day or Valentine's Gift," a spokesman said.

Acts include baritone, Lukasz Biela, comedian Mike Doyle, Peter Karrie, Sarah Lark and Katy Treharne, Californian folk from Zervas & Pepper, dancing from the renowned Dawnsyr Nant Garw and the Debbie Chapman Dancers, plus the Symphonic Brass Wales and a massed choir.

The concert will feature music from *Phantom of the Opera*,

*Les Misérables* and much more. Hosts include Arfon Haines-Davies, Connie Fisher, Angharad Mair, Roy Noble, Margaret Williams and Lucy and Rhodri Owen. Tickets, priced at £12-£18, can be bought on the St David's Hall website, concessions are available.

Other Bobath events include the annual birthday ball on Friday, July 12 in the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

The charity is asking supporters to 'dig deep' to help raise money during this milestone year by taking part in fundraising activities, including baking for Bobath, cake sales, raffles, promise auctions, car boot sales, coffee mornings and dance marathons.

Contact the charity team on [fundraising@bobath-wales.org](mailto:fundraising@bobath-wales.org), call 02920 522600 or visit [www.bobathwales.org](http://www.bobathwales.org).

**DON'T MISS THE... BARRY NR. CARDIFF TOY & TRAIN SALE SUNDAY, 3RD FEBRUARY, 2013 10.30am - 3.00pm**

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# RNLI heroes to get medals for 'an extremely high risk' rescue

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The spokesman added: "To add to this, the water level was still rising and conditions deteriorating as heavy rain continued to fall."

"At 1.51am, the team launched their modified Arancia rescue boat with Chris Missen at the helm. Boat team leader Paul Eastment and crew member Martin Blaker-Rowe

kept a lookout for debris coming downstream, and guided Chris along the safest route to Mrs Glover.

"Chris expertly manoeuvred the boat in the darkness, with only the crews' headtorches and a small spotlight for help. Meanwhile, the police helicopter was hovering over the spot where Mrs Glover clung to the branch, using their spotlight to pick out

where she was. Chris carefully directed the boat just downstream of Mrs Glover, where maintaining a steady position in such conditions was extremely difficult.

"Martin and Paul reached for Mrs Glover, and immediately started to pull her into the boat. "She was extremely cold, and it is unlikely she would have been physically able to hold onto the branch for much longer.

"There was no time or space to get Mrs Glover into a comfortable position and Chris retraced his steps out into the flow and upstream.

"At 1.57am Mrs Glover was successfully brought to shore, assessed, and given first aid. She had been in the water for 50 minutes.

Paul Eastment said: "I was amazed and delighted, gobsmacked even, when I heard I'd been awarded an RNLI

Bronze Medal for Gallantry. For our actions to be recognised, is the proudest moment of my career.

"Most importantly for me, was the recognition for the team – the risk to all of us was significant – and each member of the team was vital to the successful of the rescue."

Michael Vlasto, RNLI operations director, said: "This was a rescue carried out in the true spirit of the RNLI; the crew assessed the risks and made the decision collectively that, despite the extremely high risk to themselves, the benefit of attempting the rescue was greater.

"This decision, and their skill in extremely challenging circumstances, unquestionably saved Mrs Glover's life.

"Their selfless and courageous actions meant that a family could be reunited with a mother and wife they thought

was lost, two days before Christmas."

Neil Blackburn, group manager with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, and on scene incident commander, said:

"During my 26 years in the Fire and Rescue Service, this would rate among the most challenging incidents with which I have had to contend.

"Their efforts – without doubt – saved the life of Mrs Glover."

Vanessa Glover added: "Please give as generously as you are able to support the work of the RNLI, so that we might, through our combined efforts, say thank you to these remarkable heroes."

The awards will be presented at the RNLI's annual presentation of awards ceremony in May at the Barbican, London.

## 'Fly grazing will not be tolerated!'

W E L S H Government Ministers are providing extra £150,000 funding to address the issue of fly grazing.

Large numbers of horses have been abandoned in publicly owned spaces, common land and private land.

The majority of fly grazing incidents have occurred in Bridgend, the Vale, and Cardiff.

Alun Davies AM, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, said: "The behaviour of those horse owners who seek to avoid their responsibilities through the practice of abandonment or fly grazing will

not be tolerated anywhere in Wales.

"I would strongly advise landowners who find themselves victims of fly grazing, to come forward and report incidents – and any associated anti-social behaviour."

Mr Davies also said: "The extra funding will help meet the significant legal costs of prosecutions already in hand and planned against the perpetrators of fly grazing."

"The Welsh Government, working in close and effective partnership with the police, local authorities and welfare charities, is determined to deal with the problem, swiftly and robustly."

## Story of a frozen Superfortress

IN February 1947, the American Boeing Superfortress B29 on a secret Cold War spying mission, made an emergency landing in the freezing wastes of north west Greenland – where it remained abandoned for the next 50 years.

The crew escaped alive. Tomorrow (February 1) at the meeting of Penarth Aviation Society, Lawrence Ferris will be introducing a video telling the story of how, in 1994, a

privately financed team set out to repair and fly this iconic bomber back to the US.

Although forced to land with engine trouble, the frame of the Superfortress remained intact, frozen in time and literally, on the icecap.

Penarth Aviation Society meets on the first Friday of each month at the Penarth Conservative Club, 7.45pm for 8pm. For further information, call David Ephraim on 01446 721321.

# A West End 'super farce' comes to the Millennium Centre

If you think that the term 'Commedia dell'Arte' is the new special at selected branches of Jamie's Italian, then think again.

The rather fancy term, translated as 'comedy of the guild' instead is the genre best exemplified at present by *One Man, Two Guvnors*, the stage comedy that gave James Corden

Broadway success, and the show recently landed at the Wales Millennium Centre for a five-day engagement.

The story, set in Brighton in 1963, sees Francis Henshall (played in Cardiff by Corden's understudy Owain Arthur) find himself caught up in a farce when he becomes beholden to two 'guvnors', and tries to keep both happy, while making sure neither finds out about the other; all the more intriguing when the two 'guvnors' in question are themselves linked...

The success of James Corden in the lead role of Francis in the West End and Broadway has created something of a

by GARETH JAMIESON

conundrum in terms of any other actors approaching the character – something that Owain Arthur was no doubt more than aware of prior to embarking on the Welsh leg of this tour.

However, his performance, full of manic energy, excellent comedy timing and an attention to detail that pays off greatly, is the spark that ignites Richard Bean's hilarious farcical comedy, resulting in a truly memorable experience.

You can see glimpses of why Corden was such a triumph, but at the same time, Arthur offers something different in Henshall, and not just the addition of a few nods to his strong Welsh accent!

The template of the comedy asks the lead to be on his toes for the duration of the play, and Arthur brings a wonderful physicality to the performance as a man always trying to stay one step ahead and only just managing it.

Fans of farce and the comedy of errors will

delight in this play, while those less moved by it will slowly be drawn in by the quick-fire nature of the jokes (both verbal and visual) and the wonderful performances.

There are frequent non-sequiturs, asides to the audience that break the fourth wall, and the odd moment of audience interaction that gives the play a pleasing sense of levity without becoming too pantomime.

Alongside Arthur there are a number of wonderful turns, from Edward Bennett and Rosie Wyatt as the 'guvnors' of the title, to Leon Williams' amusing turn as affected actor Alan Dangle – in fact, there isn't a weak performance among the cast, who all execute the delivery of the play with stylish aplomb.

*One Man Two Guvnors* is a play well worth catching, and those lucky enough to have seen it during its run at the WMC will no doubt share that sentiment – a hilarious night out is guaranteed!

New proprietors Paul Bullock and award-winning French chef, Cyril Royer (already known to Vale diners), arrived in December, acquainted themselves with their regular customers and now are delighted to launch their full schedule of popular favourites...

plus Cyril's exquisite, imaginative French cuisine.

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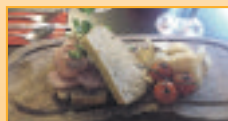
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## "his and hers" valentine's menu

To start your romantic evening in a perfect way, you will be greeted with amuse bouche and champagne.

### your menu

Pre starter: Home chorizo and prawn lollies, homecured salmon in beetroot wasabi yogurt.

### hers starters

A love making fusion of white and green asparagus cream spiced with edible flowers and truffle oil

Rustic home-made coarse local rilette of pork, pickled onion puree and an onion crusty roll with piccalilli

### ♥♥♥ mains

Crab, lemon grass and French clam ravioli, Roasted butternut squash infused in pea veloute drizzled with parmesan oil and a purple basil

Steak and kidney suet pudding, seasonal vegetables and salsify braised in red wine liquor

### ♥♥♥ dessert

Cold strawberry and lime soufflé with a honeycomb biscuit

Banana and chocolate butter pudding whiskey with an orange custard

### ♥♥♥ to finish

Pistachio truffles

An alternative vegetarian option is available

£21.95 per person

FREE BOTTLE OF HOUSE WINE for booked tables of four or more



# The Dining Room



## Valentine's Night

February 14th

3 Course  
Evening  
Dining  
£25 pp

Smoked Mackerel Pate  
with toasted crusty bread and balsamic red onion relish

Asparagus Soup (v)  
with herb croutons and parmesan

Smoked Salmon on Pickled Cucumber  
with dill and chive crème fraîche

Seared Scallops  
with parsnip purée, petite salad, parsnip ribbons and walnut dressing

Breaded Beetroot (v)  
on dressed rocket with cream cheese and chive dip

Barnsley Lamb Chop with honey chantenay carrots,  
pea and fresh mint purée, new potatoes, port jus

Pan Fried Hake  
on a mussel, clam and tomato linguine

Roast Breast or Barbary Duck  
with pak choi, silky mash, rich cherry and port sauce

Fillet of Beef Medallions (cooked m/w)  
topped with our sweet red onion relish and melted stilton  
with green beans, wrapped in bacon, pont neuf potatoes  
sautéed wild mushrooms

Leek and Stilton Tart (v) with walnut,  
peppery rocket and cherry tomato salad, balsamic glaze

Bailey's Cheesecake with chocolate dressings

Welsh Cheese and Biscuits Selection (for 2)  
with chutney, grapes, celery

Poached Pears with winter berries,  
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# Valentine's Day Dining

## Savour that so sensuous quality of dining out on Valentine's Day!

**T**HE approach of Valentine's Day is often a nervous time for both men and women – because an all-important choice has to be made – how to celebrate in style?

It is a relatively easy decision for some – in particular, a couple who have an established relationship, with several years under their belts.

By now (*touch wood!*) they should know what works for them. They will have made a few mistakes and can, all being well, look back and smile...

For the newer relationship, however, it is a little like putting on a blindfold and setting off into a minefield!

In theory, in these modern times of gender equality, a couple should be able to arrive at a joint decision, but life is rarely that simple!

By a process that is hard to chart or quantify, one half of the duo will generally end up making the final choice.

It will be 'his choice' – or 'her choice' – and he or she will have to face the music afterwards! Considering the options, by far

the most popular one is choosing to dine out – and this does have so many advantages.

First, both here in the Vale and in Bridgend county boroughs, there are just so many different places to eat – and so many different styles of cooking to choose from.

After all, there can be few places as cosy and comforting as a country inn on a cold night in February, sitting in front of a real fire, as you browse the menu, and then settling down for a great meal.

What is more, the simple law of competition and survival of the fittest ensures that standards stay high.

Restaurateurs will pitch their menus at different niches in the market, from *cordon bleu* to simple and wholesome, but at a time of austerity, each knows they must deliver the goods, or diners will just go elsewhere.

That perfect Valentine's experience doesn't have to be confined to an intimate setting in the country, of course... In towns such as Barry, Cowbridge, Penarth, Llantwit Major, Bridgend or Porthcawl, there is a wealth of venues available.

You can choose a smart modern brasserie, or somewhere serving tapas, or take your choice from a huge range of national cuisines now being offered in the area.

The days when the 'exotic' choice consisted of Italian, Indian or Chinese have long gone!

Town-based restaurants, of course, offer the added attraction of extending the evening by heading for a popular nightspot – whether that be a pub, club or disco.

(CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 19)

## Da Gennaro RISTORANTE ITALIANO

### New Lunch Menu

Italian Omelette - Cheese & Ham

Panini with Meatballs in

Tomato Sauce

Panini Capresa -

Sliced Tomatoes, Mozzarella

Traditional Lasagna

Spaghetti Bolognese

Penne Al Pomodoro

Jack Potatoes

served with Chilli Con Carne

or Cheese & Coleslaw

Pizza - 2 Toppings

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# Valentine's Day Dining



## Let a chef take the cooking strain on special day of love!

(CONTINUED  
FROM PAGE 18)

Some couples may want to push the boat out and dine in a smart restaurant, where they can enjoy wine and liqueurs with a leisurely meal before retiring to a pre-booked hotel suite.

As befits a proud Frenchman, TV chef Jean-Christophe Novelli is well aware that dining out should, above all, be a sensual experience.

In a recent interview, he said: "Ahh, food can be very sexy but it's definitely not enough on its own to seduce a woman - you need to have that special connection."

He wasn't actually offering any seduction tips. In fact, he has (surprise) a book to sell, offering some sensual and romantic recipes for couple to cook at home!

However, he had to admit: "Many men tend to try to over-impress if they cook for a woman, and it often ends in disaster."

"Women also can try too hard to make an over-elaborate dish, which is tiring to prepare and then they are hardly likely to be in the mood for romance, after all that effort."

These are astute observations that point to one obvious solution - eating out and avoiding a romantic disaster.

For the record, the multi-Michelin-

starred chef has gathered together his recipes in a new book, *Everyday Novelli*.

So, here is one recipe - a fast, sensuous dessert that you can prepare and leave in the fridge for one last treat before the evening is over!

### ICED WHITE CHOCOLATE WITH WHISKY.

Serves 6-12 (so there's plenty left over for other romantic occasions!)

Prep time: five minutes. Freezer time: one hour.

#### Ingredients:

200g white chocolate;  
20ml whisky, chilled;  
180ml double cream, chilled.

Break the chocolate into very small pieces. Put a non-stick saucepan on a low heat until just warm. Remove from the heat.

Add the white chocolate and stir with a wooden spoon so that the chocolate melts very slowly.

Add the whisky and double cream straight from the fridge. Continue stirring until slight ribbons form.

Pour into an ice-cube tray or ice-lolly moulds and freeze for at least one hour.

PHILIP IRWIN

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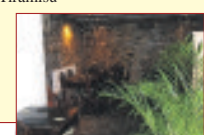
Thai Lamb Coconut Soup  
Tomato and Mozzarella Salad  
Salmon in a Champagne Sauce  
Duck and Port pate  
Prawn Cocktail  
Crab Cakes

Beef Stroganoff  
Seared Swordfish with Garlic Mash and Mushroom Gravy  
Chicken Parcels in a tarragon and cream Sauce with Baby Leeks  
Pan Fried Fillet Steak  
Spaghetti with Mixed Seafood  
Mixed Mushroom Stroganoff

Lemon Cheesecake  
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Sunday Evenings from 5pm Cabaret  
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Entertainer in Town'

Saturdays - Live Bands from 8.30pm

2nd February - 'The Don'

9th February - 'Morning Wood'

16th February - '617'

23rd February - 'Too Toned'

Ashaa's Night 3

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# Council looks at future of schools with low numbers

MEMBERS of the lifelong learning scrutiny committee have been presented with options for the future of primary and secondary schools in the Vale – as the Welsh Government urges councils to tackle the issue of schools that have low pupil numbers.

However, the recommendations were classed as financially sensitive, so they have not yet been made public, and the committee discussed them behind closed doors when the meeting took place last Monday (January 21).

A Schools Review Group, made up of five councillors: Nic Hodges (Plaid); Rhiannon Birch (Labour); Howard Hamilton (Labour); Bob Penrose (Independent) and Eddie Williams (Llantwit Major First Independent) has been looking at the issue.

Although their brief has not been made public, similar studies have looked at schools that have unfilled places, and at the possibility of merging schools that have low pupil numbers.

A report that was made public at the scrutiny meeting quoted Estyn, the Welsh Government school inspection body, which has estimated that the cost of surplus places is £260 per primary place and £510 per secondary place.

The committee was told that

by PHILIP IRWIN

the School Places Review Group was convened between September and December 2012, and built on the work of previous member working groups to consider pupil and school data and determine if the current configuration of schools meets the educational needs of children in the Vale in the 21st century.

It was stated that one of the statutory functions of a local authority is to ensure that there are sufficient places for all pupils, and that there are the right numbers of schools of the right type and size, and in the right locations, to fully and efficiently meet the needs of the pupil population.

The Estyn report asked how surplus places affect the resources available for expenditure on improving outcomes for pupils. It says that reductions in surplus places result in better resource management and impact on school improvement, and that local authorities should retain no more than 10 per cent surplus places across primary and secondary schools.

Leighton Andrews, Minister for Education and Skills, issued a statement to cabinet education members across Wales on highlighting the principal priority of the current Welsh Government of improving school standards.

The central theme of the minister's statement is the reduction of the number of surplus places, as

this represents a drain on resources.

The fact that a reorganisation is on the way was confirmed by the Vale Council cabinet member for children's services, Coun Chris Elmore, who said: "I am planning to present proposals to Cabinet on March 4, setting out proposals to ensure that we have the right schools in the right places for the future."

"The proposals, which will take into account the advice of the lifelong learning scrutiny committee's School Places Review Group, will involve a number of changes affecting several schools across the Vale."

"Following consideration by cabinet, the proposals will be the subject of extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in the following weeks."

Vale MP Alun Cairns said: "I'm concerned by the rumours that some primary schools in the Vale are facing closure. The Vale has some of the best schools for our children and I'm worried that several are potentially at risk."

"The schools in some of the areas that have been mentioned to me are exceptionally important and play a central part in their local communities. They include Barry and the rural Vale."

"I'm determined to do everything I can to support parents, pupils, teachers and school governors in the areas concerned, and would encourage those affected to get in touch."

## New community centre for Barry



Looking at plans for the new community centre at Alexandra Crescent in Barry with representatives from contractors Jehu are John Mudford (Alexandra Gardens Community Association secretary), Coun Gwyn John (Vale Council cabinet member for leisure, parks, culture and sport development), and Coun Stuart Egan (Vale Council Deputy Leader).

**WORK has officially started on the building of a brand new and improved community centre at Alexandra Crescent in Barry.**

A much-loved community centre had stood at the site for over 60 years after being built by volunteers in 1947, but had to close its doors in September 2011 after becoming structurally unsafe.

Passionate volunteers have since worked tirelessly to apply for funding to build a new community centre, and their efforts have paid off with the new centre set to be completed by early May, depending on weather conditions.

Funding was obtained from the Vale Council and a Barry Regeneration Grant from the Welsh Government.

Local contractors Jehu will be carrying out the works, and Alexandra Gardens Community Association secretary John Mudford, said: "We can't

wait to move back into the brand new centre. I hope that the local community will continue to help and support the new community centre and that it will be enjoyed by local people for as many years, or even longer, than its predecessor."

Siân Vaughan, the Vale Council's community development officer, said: "It's great news that work has begun on the site. The community association have been right at the heart of the plans for the new centre, with John and other dedicated volunteers putting in many hours completing the various grant forms that were required to obtain funding." The Vale Council owns 22 community centres across the county, all of which are run by volunteers.

If you'd like to get involved with your local community centre, contact Siân Vaughan on 01446 704813. Further information can also be found online at [www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

## Slimming groups help homeless centre

HOMELESS shelters across the country say they're helping more people than ever as temperatures plummet to below zero.

Local Slimming World groups in Rhose and Llantwit Major have donated over four black bags of food for the Huggard Centre in Cardiff.

Consultant Helen said: "Every year my members very kindly donate food for the Huggard Centre."

"Huggard is a registered charity which relies on donations, and just the fact that by donating this food we will have helped people who need it, is amazing."

Helen added: "At present, the centre is looking after approximately 70 people every day, so you can imagine how much food they need."

"The Huggard Centre also require donations of clothes, especially waterproof clothes, so if anyone out there is able to contribute in any way you can contact the centre on 02920 642000."

If you would like any details on Helen's groups, contact her on 01446 750738.

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# Merched y Wawr's Commons insight



The group with the Vale MP following his Commons talk.

**VALE MP Alun Cairns recently met members of Merched y Wawr, Cowbridge, at their regular monthly meeting.**

He was invited to talk to the members about his role as an MP and shared details of his life at Westminster and the House of Commons during a typical working week.

Mr Cairns said: "It was a pleasure to meet and chat with the Merched y Wawr members in Cowbridge about my role and life in the day of an MP in Westminster."

"I was delighted to accept Mary Crandon's invitation to join the group at their monthly meeting. Merched y Wawr are a terrific organisation, who now have over 280 branches across Wales – providing a social network and

support for their local communities for women, by women, through the medium of Welsh."

*Merched y Wawr y Bontfaen yn croesawi'r Aelod Seneddol lleol*

*YMUNODD yr Aelod Seneddol Alun Cairns ac aelodau Merched y Wawr y Bontfaen yn ei cyfarfod misol.*

*Gwahoddwyd Aelod Seneddol y Fro i siarad â'r grŵp am ei amser yn San*

*Steffan, i ddisgrifio ei swyddogaethau ond hefyd i rannu storïau a ffeithiau digri am weithio yn Nhy'r Cyffredin.*

*Dwedodd Mr Cairns: "Roedd yn bleser imi cael y cyfle i siarad ac aelodau Merched y Wawr Y Bontfaen am fy swydd fel Aelod Seneddol yr ardal, a'r hyn sy'n digwydd ar ddiwrnod arferol (os oes yna siwd beth!) yn San Steffan."*

*"Roeddwn yn falch iawn i dderbyn gwahoddiad Mary Crandon, Llywydd cangen y Bontfaen, i ymuno a'i cyfarfod misol. Mae Merched y Wawr yn sefydliad hynod, sydd erbyn hyn a dros 280 o ganghennau ledled Cymru – yn darparu rhwydwaith cymwynasgar yn y gymuned gan ac i ferched trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg."*

## LOCAL COMPANY PICKS UP ANOTHER TOP AWARD

**LOCAL landscaping company NP Garden & Landscaping Services Ltd is celebrating for the second year running – after winning another award for their landscaping services.**

*They collected their award – the best engineering achievement for a landscaping project – at the Marshalls annual award ceremony on Tuesday, January 15.*

*The job involved excavating and removing more than 100 tons of earth, and then building complex retaining walls, with drainage.*

*The work also involved building natural stone walls incorporating a modern water feature, along with construction of new natural stone steps and patio areas.*

*A company spokesman said: "This is the second year running we have won awards for our work, after winning the 'best patio installation' award last year."*

*The winning projects were picked from applicants from the south west of England and Wales, and were judged on design, construction detailing and quality of*

*workmanship.*

*NP Garden & Landscaping Services Ltd specialise in garden and driveway makeovers, and has now been established for more than 12 years.*

*The company has also recently become a member of both the Government-approved trustmark scheme, and the association of professional landscapers.*



Nick Palmer (centre) receives the award from Carrie and Mark of Marshalls, the sponsors.



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## Adam's 'starter for ten on' University Challenge TV show



LEFT: Adam (far left) pictured with his Bangor teammates on the TV show.

A BARRY-bred university student was part of the victorious Bangor team which defeated Durham this week on the BBC TV quiz University Challenge.

Bangor is flying the Welsh flag as the last university from Wales left in the competition, and Adam Pearce is one of its team members.

Adam (25) attended the Welsh medium school Ysgol Sant Baruc in the town, before going on to Ysgol Gyfun Glantaf in Cardiff – it was before the Vale had its own Welsh medium secondary school in Barry.

Adam is currently studying for a PhD in translation studies at Bangor University in north Wales.

He explained that there was strong competition just to get on the team.

"There were more than 100 students who competed for a place in the Bangor team, so I feel privileged to be a member.

"The team then had to go through a rigorous selection process even to get on TV – there were several rounds of questioning, both in Bangor, and at the ITV studios in Manchester where filming takes place."

One question put to the teams

concerned two Pontypridd brothers and which song they had written.

First on the button was Adam with the answer that it was the Welsh national anthem.

Questionmaster Jeremy Paxman commented: "If you'd got that wrong, they would have never let you go home!"

Although he has exchanged south for north Wales, Adam said there was one strong comparison.

"I do sometimes miss home in Barry, but the great thing about Bangor is that we're by the sea here, as well!"

## Barry's winter wonderland

by MATTHEW MORGAN



LOCAL photographer Matthew Morgan captured these snowy scenes during the recent bout of cold weather. As usual, the rule seems to be that the youngsters love it, while for the adults it's all a bit of a chore.

## CARE FORUM GROUP LAUNCHED

A NEW group is being launched to support vulnerable adults with complex mental health needs in Bridgend and the Vale.

Care Forum Wales is setting up the special interest group to "drive up standards and give providers a unified voice" and a prime mover is trained psychiatric nurse Michelle Martin, whose company runs five specialist care homes in south Wales.

A spokesman said the aim is to look after the interest of young adults, between the ages of 18 and 65.

Care Forum Wales

Policy Officer Melanie Minty believes the creation of the new group specialising in the needs of younger adults will be an important development: "Most of the focus of society seems to be on children or the elderly, yet it is an area of increasing impact through drugs and alcohol misuse. We believe it is essential to represent the whole spectrum of social care needs in Wales."

For more information, contact 077399 70180 or though Care Forum on 07969 489290 or 01873 880816 or email melanie@careforumwales.co.uk.

## Devastation caused by Tasmanian bush fires



LEFT: Bush fires have left a trail of destruction.

LAST week, The GEM told the thrilling story of how a young woman on an exchange visit between the Vale and Australia took supplies out to people on a Tasmanian peninsula because they were threatened by bush fires.

Leanne Martlew (27) jet-skied 70 kilometres along the coast to deliver drinks and food to people who were waiting to be evacuated by boats.

Leanne has sent this photograph of a burnt out bus and scorched vegetation, illustrating the destruction caused by the fires in Tasmania earlier this month.

## 'TOWN NEEDS MORE PARKING'

WE moved to Wales in 1970, when our factory came to Bridgend under the WDA scheme.

Not knowing the area, we were delighted when we found Cowbridge – a delightful market town full of small shops selling local produce and staffed by friendly, welcoming people.

Unfortunately, many of those small shops have gone and those remaining are struggling as there is limited parking.

The Town Hall car park is full very early in the morning, more so since Waitrose opened. People from

Llanblethian and surrounding villages need to use cars and if living on their own, find the personal contact with people they know comforting.

So when will the Vale Council realise the town will die if more parking is not provided?

Mrs Jean Dale, Cowbridge.

## 'Love thy neighbour' urges Barry councillor

A Barry councillor has appealed to people in the Vale to keep a particular eye on vulnerable neighbours during periods of severe weather.

Coun Richard Bertin, chair of the local authority's social care committee, said: "I am fully aware of the problems the vulnerable people face during adverse

weather. Not only do motorists suffer through the snow, but so do those with heart and respiratory problems.

"These people find it hard in the cold due to these problems.

"Councils such as the Vale of Glamorgan are geared up and doing their bit to help the most vulnerable. They have 4 x 4 vehicles with social work teams out and about visiting the community."

Coun Bertin said social services would appreciate the public being vigilant if they had a neighbour who might need help.

"Social work teams also would like you to act as their eyes and ears and let the council know of anyone facing difficulty. People can call the Vale's Social Care team on 01446 7001."

## Guides in store

ON Saturday, February 2, the 1st Llandough Guides will join forces with volunteers from Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern for a fundraising event at Morrisons, Cardiff Bay.

As part of the community action section of the Guide programme, the girls will be bagpacking from 10am -3pm.

There will also be a display in store with further information on Guiding in Dinas Powys and Llandough as well as details of the help available from DPVC.

For further information contact llan-doughguides@googlemail.com.

## ASBO for horse trader's son

A HORSE trader's son has been given an ASBO after a Vale Council investigation

Thomas Hope Price, son of Tom Price (senior), has received an interim Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO), after continued issues of fly-grazing and straying horses in the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend county borough.

Thomas Hope Price, of Glamorgan Horse Traders Ltd, received the interim ASBO on Tuesday, January 28, 2013, following "excellent partnership between the Vale of Glamorgan Trading Standards Department, Bridgend Trading Standards and South Wales Police".

The principal trading standards officer for the Vale Council, Christina Roberts-Kinsey, said: "We will continue to work on tackling these issues and I hope the introduction of the conditions will address any remaining problems in the area."

"The order has been made in the same terms as the order relating to Mr Tom Price (senior); namely that both individuals must not allow animals owned by them, or under their care or control, to stray on the highway, and also from keeping horses on land with-



Thomas Hope Price.

out a valid written legal agreement of the landowner.

"They have also been prevented from selling, or transferring ownership, of a horse which is not correctly identified, where the details have not been updated with his ownership details."

The Superintendent and Police Commander for Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan, Paul James, said: "This is another example of positive partnership working to resolve issues faced within the Vale and Bridgend county borough."

"This ASBO demonstrates that police, along with our partner agencies, are tackling anti-social behaviour within our communities and are getting tougher on those who display this type of behaviour."

"A breach of this Anti-Social Behaviour Order carries serious penalties. The community's help in letting us know when these orders are broken is vital to their success."

## Penarth trees will be trimmed

THE Vale Council's parks and ground maintenance team will begin planned tree works in the Penarth Escarpment, Paget Hill and Portway area on February 4.

These will continue through until March 28, to improve woodland management and cut overhanging trees in the vicinity.

"The team will remove branches overhanging onto pavements, car parks and play areas, while tree thinning and removal will also be undertaken by the team to reduce encroachment," a spokeswoman said.

"Traffic controls will be in place on Paget Road Hill while work is ongoing. All planned work is dependent upon weather and ground conditions."



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# Council 'flood room' was at the ready as thaw followed freeze

THE Vale Council's emergency planning team set up a special 'flood room' at the weekend, in response to problems caused by

flooding across the Vale of Glamorgan.

As the snow thawed and heavy rain was forecast for the area, the team liaised with visible services, the council's contact centre (CIV), public pro-

tection and communications departments, as well as the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

In the early hours of Saturday morning, the team delivered sandbags to residents in Llandow village, High Street, Cowbridge, and Tyler House Close in Llanmaes.

In Cowbridge, High Street was temporarily closed on Saturday morning and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service was in attendance. Drains in Westgate were unblocked and diverted to a culvert.

The fire service also attended properties at Thaw Close in Rhosne, and St Mary Hill.

## BUGSY MALONE

BUGSY MALONE is being performed at St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School, Argae Lane, Barry, on February 5, 6 and 7 at 7pm.

Ticket prices £6 adults and £4 concessions, available from the school's reception; telephone 01446 729250.

Sandbags were placed in these locations and light portable pumps were used to tackle flooding.

Signage was placed on a number of other flooded roads across the Vale.

The Vale's gritting crews were deployed as road temperatures were set to drop in the early hours of Saturday morning with a risk of ice.

The team continued to monitor the situation during the weekend, responding to calls from residents.

## Readers' snow snaps



Susan Borges sent this photo of Eleri, Cerys and Elin in Barry.



Michelle, from local company 2012 Flooring, sent this photo of her rabbit taking a fancy to the snowman's parsnip nose!

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## 'Flying Start' spreads wings

TOTS in the most deprived areas of the Vale will get a better start in life, thanks to the expansion of a council-run project.

The Flying Start programme, funded by the Welsh Government, is already working in Gibbonsdown and Cadoxton to improve the development, health and wellbeing of children under four.

With the scheme set to double in size over the next two years, the team will soon be winging its way into more communities across the Vale in 2013.

From April, Flying Start will be working with families in the Castleland area of Barry.

The Vale Council's Flying Start programme expansion manager, Antonia Bridges, said: "I am delighted to announce the expansion of Flying Start into the Castleland area of Barry from April."

"We currently work in Gibbonsdown and Cadoxton areas but will be doubling in size over the next two years and be able to offer a service to 1,200 children. The aim of the project is to improve a child's development, health and well being in preparation for school, giving them a better start in life."

For more information, contact Flying Start on 01446 723180 or you can email: flyingstart@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

## News from the NFU Vale Ladies

NFU Vale of Glamorgan Ladies followed up a nine lesson carol service at Penllyn church on January 15 when the annual dinner was held at The Grove Golf Club, Porthcawl for 40 members.

A vote of thanks went to Elizabeth Jervis and Ann Rees from Ray Evans for organising the event.

The NFU Vale Ladies meet monthly and are mostly farmers' wives. New members are always welcome.

The next meeting is on February 19 at 7.30pm at Penllyn village hall when the speaker, Rebecca Exley, will give a talk on the Physic Garden in Cowbridge. JS

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# Giant hailstones cause chaos on M4 near Bridgend



ABOVE: Traffic heading east on the M4 has come to a stop as emergency services deal with the crash.

RIGHT: : Looking back towards Port Talbot, traffic heading east has come to a stop, with two cars caught on the crash barrier.

Meanwhile, in the distance, two cars heading west have stopped in the fast lane after an incident.

**HAILSTONES** brought chaos to the M4 last Sunday (January 27) and 11 motorists were reported to be injured – although none seriously.

Worst affected was the M4 between Pyle and Margam, and GEM photographer Keith E Morgan happened to be passing just after traffic ground to a halt. at 12.35pm

From where he stood, on a bridge over the motorway, it was possible to see three separate accidents – two heading east towards Bridgend, and another in the opposite direction.

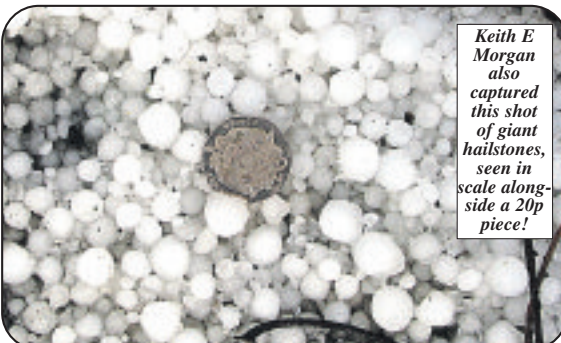
It was reported that, 30 minutes later, a car left the road between junction 34 and 35, while a similar incident took place between Sarn and Pyle.

**Did you know you can find The GEM on Twitter and Facebook? Follow us @gem\_news or 'friend' us at: facebook.com/gemnews**

## PHOTOGRAPHS by KEITH E MORGAN



ABOVE: One of the cars in the east-bound crash.



Keith E Morgan also captured this shot of giant hailstones, seen in scale alongside a 20p piece!

## 'The rural team has done good work, but not with Perfect Pitch'

**I AM writing in response to the accusation that I am a "short-sighted: camp site owner."**

I read with great interest The GEM letter of January 24 from Annette Chinn MD of Task Force, and would like to point out a few things that the public and business owners of the Vale are unaware of.

As Task Force is one of the local businesses that we promote in the arrival pack we give to visitors, I am a little surprised at the 'I'm alright Jack!' attitude.

I have never said I was not grateful for the support of the European funding we received, or that the Creative Rural Communities (CRC) team had not done good work.

However, the Perfect Pitch project was outside of their remit and, instead, caused distress and damage to existing businesses and local residents.

I wonder if Annette would be as supportive of the CRC team if, after applying for her grant, they took her intellectual property and used the information gleaned to then canvas six local land owners, pay for them to set up in competition to Task Force (in this time of economic recession) and then push inappropriate planning applications through, so that her business was forever reduced.

In addition, how would she feel if they then erected huge blue AA signs throughout the Vale, directing traffic away from Task

Force and displacing business to these new sites? Now, rather than one or two going for planning, the CRC team are talking with the other sites, offering them the branding and website to promote the Perfect Pitch brand on an ongoing basis, causing us even more long-term harm.

Addressing Annette's point on 'appropriate planning', we were told all the sites were checked for the possibility of planning being approved, yet five of the chosen sites are inside the boundary of the Heritage Coast.

The Vale's own 'Tour Four' planning policy clearly states no new campsites should be considered inside of this boundary: a fact residents near the other proposed sites need to be aware of.

Despite this, one of these sites has already been granted full planning permission, with the Vale planning department waiving this policy, so that the project can be seen as a success.

We have always promoted local businesses to our visitors and believe that all businesses in the Vale should work together with the planning department and teams such as CRC and find common ground for the good of the Vale.

I am very pleased that the Task Force grant has opened up her business, but I warn her that there is nothing now to stop the CRC team offering grants to landowners with a bit of spare forestry and wanting to diversify using the

28-day rule, applying to CRC for similar grants to open up in competition.

Regarding the point Annette raised "with the downturn in most tourism businesses under the current economic climate", this is exactly the point I am trying to make. For her, it proved money well spent, enhancing existing businesses such as Task Force has helped employment in the area.

The money should not be used to work against existing businesses in such hard times, allowing five small sites in such a small area has only displaced business from us.

If the money had been spent helping existing sites upgrade facilities, as on Task Force, I would be singing the praises of the CRC team too.

On Annette's other statement, "that at the launch she attended, CRC said that many sites were fully booked during the Eisteddfod" – it was the case that only one site was full – Llandow. No one asked us if we were fully booked, or any of the other sites, as far as I am aware.

Annette, we shall still promote your business to our visitors. I am pleased your business has been funded to grow, and I wish you every success in the current climate – but please offer other business owners the same respect and consideration.

**MARK EDWARDS,**  
(Owner, Happy Jake's Touring Park).

## YOUR CHANCE TO SHARE THE COMMUNITY NEWS

**COMMUNITY NEWS** from  
**KENFIG HILL AND PYLE**  
by **Richard Sims**  
Telephone: 01656 746840  
Mobile: 07802 439679  
E-Mail: richardsims@talktalk.net

### Vandalism

IN recent times, the local council has to be praised for its efforts in providing new shelters at the bus stops in Kenfig Hill and Pyle to protect residents from the inclement weather particularly at this time of year.

However, hooligans see it differently: it appears that the shelters are there to give them pleasure by smashing windows and therefore taking away a lot of the protection (See photo above, right).

Do these mindless idiots not realise that these shelters are used by grandparents, mothers with their young children, people going to work, pupils going to school, people who have to make hospital visits, disabled people and blind people, many of whom could be their own family members?

When I went to take a picture of this vandalism, I met Lyndon Powell from Kenfig Hill, a blind person and his guide dog, who was trying to negotiate his way around the glass on the pavement by going on to the road to avoid his dog getting cut paws, so that he could visit the shop before catching a bus.

He found it most

upsetting that people could get pleasure from carrying out such acts. The bus shelter in question is situated at the bottom of High Street in Kenfig Hill.

When I contacted local borough councillor, Mrs Pauline James about the situation, she informed me that this particular shelter had been targeted before.

In a statement, Mrs James, who incidentally campaigned for these shelters when a community councillor, said it was sad in this day and age that we should have to put up with such despicable behaviour.

### SHOUT

**MAESTEG SHOUT** have organised a meeting at the Bavo offices in Maesteg on Tuesday February 5 at 2pm.

Dorothy Edwards, who is the locality director for Bridgend with Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, is attending to discuss the future of the Princess of Wales Hospital and the future services in Bridgend county borough.

Members of SHOUT forum for the over 50s, are welcome as are members of the public in that age group.

For further information regarding this and



local activities in Kenfig Hill SHOUT, ring Stan Rumble on 01656 741203.

### Pupil of the Week

**MYNYDD Cynffig Junior School** pupils who were nominated for impressing the staff last week:

Liam Knight – Class 1, Victoria Franklyn – Class 2, Shakur Gough – Class 3, Finley Hampton – Class 4, Codi Pritchard – Class 5, Meghan Evans – Class 6 and Cai Downs – Class 7. The head teachers award went to Ellie Bevan – Class 3.

**Special lunch:** Congratulations also go to the following pupils, who joined Mr Davies for a special lunch last Friday as a reward for their high standard of behaviour, including politeness to both staff and fellow pupils during lunchtimes last week:

Nathan Chung, Alex Foote-Bruce, Bronagh O'Neil, Kelsey Williams, Hadi Akpinar, Carys Orchard, Mia Hopkins, Lik To Chung, Joshua Hughes and Ryan Legg. Class 1 Assembly: Class 2 with Mrs Powis will be performing their

assembly on Friday, February 8 in the school hall starting at 10.15am. Parents and grandparents of the pupils taking part are welcome to attend and to stay for refreshments after the performance.

### Llys Ton

**THE Ogmere Valley Male Voice Choir** are performing in Llys Ton, Kenfig Hill on Friday, February 15 at 7pm. Entry is £3, and all are welcome to what should be a most entertaining evening.

For further information regarding the activities at Llys Ton, which is located in Waunbant Road, Kenfig Hill, telephone 01656 745666.

### Wellbeing Centre

**ACTIVITIES** being held by the Mental Health Matters Wales at the Talbot Community, Prince Road, Kenfig Hill on Wednesday, February 6, include arts and crafts with Valley and Vale from 2pm to 4pm; a Carers' Centre talk with Steve from 3pm to 5pm; and the Reading Group from 3pm to 4pm. There will also be



# ST MICHAEL'S EXTERIOR IS RESTORED... WORK COMPLETE ON 'WHITE CHURCH' AT COLWINSTON



*Work gets under way.*



*The church, a proud beacon on the Colwinston landscape, is reclaiming its reputation as one of Wales' 'white churches'.*

## WORK has recently been completed on the exterior of St Michael's & All Angels Church in Colwinston.

It is one of the 'white churches of Wales', and now truly lives up to this epithet once again.

The Grade-1 listed 12th century church underwent major restoration work in 2000, helped by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

When the refurbishment was undertaken at the millennium, the church was lime rendered and lime-washed, not only was this taking the church back to how it would have looked when built in the 12th century but the application of the lime would allow the building to "breathe" as was originally intended.

Since the lime washing in 2000, several

hundred years of water had seeped through the stonework which resulted in considerable staining and damage to the render itself.

This meant a major undertaking to re-lime wash the exterior of the church at a cost of £36,000. A sub committee was set up and three years of fundraising and grant applications followed.

The whole community in Colwinston had worked together to raise funds for the painting project, by putting on a ball and two very successful concerts in the winter months, and holding strawberry teas and open garden days during the summer.

However, this project could not have been realised without funding from the Heritage Lottery.

Further grants were received from the Grant Weston Foundation, the James

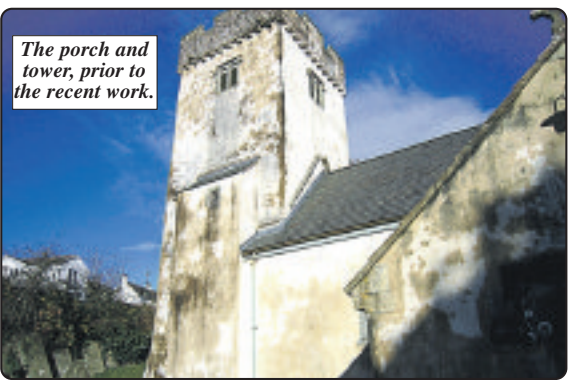
Pantfyedwen Foundation, the Representative Body of the Church in Wales, the Churches & Pastoral Committee, and a Welsh Church Act grant.

Without their financial assistance, the project could not have gone ahead and the community in Colwinston is most grateful to each of the grant providers but in particular the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Our heritage has been protected and once again we have a building at the heart of the community of which we can be proud.

The painting was completed just in time for a village wedding at the end of last year, when the interior was decorated with flowers and candles, and the shining white exterior lit up a dark December afternoon.

**PAMELA HAINES,**  
church warden



*The porch and tower, prior to the recent work.*

## Sandville thanks local restaurant for its support



*Guests preparing to enjoy the special celebration award meal*

**THE Bengal Lounge Restaurant in Kenfig Hill has been in business for just two years but in that time, it has held three charity fundraising evenings for the Sandville Self Help Centre at Tŷn Kenfig.**

Receiving a cheque for £1,200 raised recently, Sister Gwyneth Poacher thanked Abdul Kahim, proprietor, and said that she was delighted and overwhelmed by the response that she had received for the Sandville from the restaurant, the management and staff and all those who had attended

### Report and pictures by **KEITH E MORGAN**

the evening as well as the entertainers who had given their services free in order to make the evening such a success.

Gwyneth stated that the Sandville Centre relies on such donations, both large and small, in order to keep it open and functioning.

She added that the centre is run entirely voluntarily, and currently there are 92 volunteers, who ensure that Sandville provides a full round-the-clock seven-days-per-week service to its patients.

The volunteers came from all walks of life and professions and help at Sandville as carers, cleaners, cooks, therapists, hairdressers or in any other way that they can.

As well as providing cover at Sandville Court, many of these volunteers were drivers who in their own vehicles, conveyed patients back and forth to Velindre, and other hospitals, for treatment.

In the background, often unsung, there were tradespeople, organisations and businesses like the Bengal Lounge, who regularly provided their time, services and funds to keep the wheels at Sandville well oiled and turning.



**ABOVE:**  
The cheque for £1,200 is presented to Sister Gwyneth Poacher of the Sandville, by Abdul Kahim, proprietor of the Bengal Lounge Restaurant.

**LEFT:**  
Dave Jones, Hi Tide, (left) and Gareth Maund, landlord, Prince of Wales, Kenfig, with Alan Griffiths, singer and entertainer.



# University of the Third Age entertain Senedd members

DESPITE the snow and blizzards last week, Bridgend county borough's more hardy older folk, were among those who travelled to the Cardiff Senedd to raise the AMs' awareness of the benefits of lifelong learning offered by the 53 U3A groups in Wales.

The event originated as a Porthcawl initiative almost a year ago and because of the interest shown by the Welsh Government, it soon became an all Wales U3A exhibition, sponsored by Deputy Minister for Skills, Jeff Cuthbert AM.

All U3A groups are autonomous and self-funded and members illustrated their wide range of activities and interests to Assembly Members and local authority leaders.

U3A in Wales has a low public profile compared with England, which has twice the membership on a pro-rata population basis, and help was sought to promote and encourage more local U3A study groups to become established in Wales.

Some local groups failed to attend because of the weather, but the Porthcawl coach left the Rest Hotel at 7.30am and snaked its way up a snow-covered M4 to Cardiff. Surprisingly, by mid morning, more U3A groups began arriving, having travelled from Fishguard, Machynlleth, Abegele and Penmaenmawr in north Wales for the event.

Besides creative displays, they provided more than two hours of live entertainment, with comedy sketches in Welsh and English, readings from Porthcawl's Writing for Pleasure group and, what must have been a first for the Senedd, the large but very entertaining Swansea U3A Ukulele band.

The Deputy Minister spent his lunchtime meeting members and said he was impressed with what he had seen and would follow up the initiative. He emphasised the importance of being able to continue interests and skills in retirement.

As the trolley loads of various handicrafts, painting and gardening exhibits began their journey out past the Senedd security officers, I sensed a look of relief on some of their faces!

GARY VICTOR, Porthcawl U3A



*Pictured RIGHT: Parish Advisory Council Chair, Jane Sullivan, Father Edmund Neizer and Paul Lindsay, former Chair of the PAC.*

## Parish says farewell to Father Edmund with a special cake!



THE Roman Catholic parish of Our Lady St Illtyd and St Cadoc's, held a farewell buffet lunch for Father Edmund Neizer on Sunday, January 27.

He is leaving the parish after exactly one year, to become Parish Priest at Tredegar, Ebbw Vale and Rhymney.

The parish presented him with gifts, in gratitude for his work on restructuring parish administration, but, far more, inspiring the parish with his spiritual teaching and energy.

Guests invited to the farewell included ministers from the Church in Wales and United Free Church. They had probably never seen such a magnificent celebration cake as the one made by Gemelli's in Newport, Father Edmund's former parish!

Father Edmund introduced the parish to these special cakes, so, of course, we had to have one to say farewell!

We are fortunate that Father Edmund will be replaced by Father George Areekuzi who comes from Newport, and we will welcome his arrival on February 1.

RS



## THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL CYNGOR BRO MORGANNWG Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012

**Development that may affect a Conservation Area/  
Datblygu a allai effeithio ar Ardal Gadwraeth**

Application No:/  
Rhif y cais: 2013/00036/FUL  
Proposal:/Cynnig: New three storey dwelling built over existing pool with access formed off Park Road 10, Park Road, Penarth  
Location:/Lleoliad: 10, Park Road, Penarth  
Conservation Area:/  
Ardal Gadwraeth: Penarth

**Conservation Area Consent /  
Caniatâd Ardal Gadwraeth**

Application No:/  
Rhif y cais: 2013/00037/CAC  
Proposal:/Cynnig: Demolition of sections of existing boundary wall to form access to proposed house 10, Park Road, Penarth  
Location:/Lleoliad: 10, Park Road, Penarth  
Conservation Area:/  
Ardal Gadwraeth: Penarth

**Listed Building Consent/  
Caniatâd Adeilad Rhedredig**

Application No:/  
Rhif y cais: 2013/00048/LBC  
Proposal:/Cynnig: Existing garage to be rebuilt and extended in revised position  
Location:/Lleoliad: Swanbridge House, St. Marys Well Bay Road, Swanbridge, Penarth

Listed Building/  
Adeilad Rhedredig: Grade II

**Affecting setting of a Listed Building/  
Cais (au) sy'n effeithio ar lleoliad Adeilad Rhedredig**

Application No:/  
Rhif y cais: 2013/00008/FUL  
Proposal:/Cynnig: Revised design for workshop and stores following collapse of garden wall  
Location:/Lleoliad: Cwrt yr Ala House, Michaelston Le Pit  
Listed Building/  
Adeilad Rhedredig: Affecting Cwrt yr Ala House, Grade II

Details may be inspected for 21 days at the address given below, or via <http://vogonline.planning-register.co.uk/>

Gall manylion eu harchwilio am 21 diwrnod yn y cyfeiriad a roddir isod, neu drwy <http://vogonline.planning-register.co.uk/>

Dated / Dyddiedig: 31 January, 2013

M. Goldworthy, Operational Manager Development & Building Control, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock Office, Barry. CF63 4RT







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**GAS SERVICES**  
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## Birthdays

**HAPPY**  
**95th BIRTHDAY**  
**30th JANUARY**  
**Mrs Vera**  
**Waite**  
*You are the best!*  
 Love from all  
 the family  
 x x x

## Retirement

**VAL FARRANT**  
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 With gratitude and warmest wishes  
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## CLASSIFIEDS

- Family Announcements
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- Birthdays
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## Lost &amp; Found

## LOST

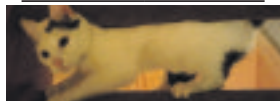
**Beautiful Persian cross**  
**Chinchilla Cat.**  
**Silver/Grey/White.**

She is a house cat and has  
 never been outside. No collar.  
 Name is Star. Got shut out of  
 house by accident on 15th  
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 Llantwit Major. Reward if found.

Contact **07972 641588**



## LOST - 'ZIGGY'



He has been missing since the storm on Sunday  
 27th January in Sycamore Crescent, Barry.  
 He is a very timid cat and he will not let  
 anybody near him. Microchipped.

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Cadoxton Funeral Home

## Family Notices

**POWELL**  
**Gaynor**

Suddenly on 19th January at home with her family,  
 Gaynor, loving wife of John, much loved mother of  
 Neil and Kevin, devoted grandmother of Theo and  
 William, much loved sister and sister-in-law, will  
 be sadly missed by all family and friends.

Funeral Service at Coychurch Crematorium on  
 Monday, 4th February at 1.15pm. Family flowers  
 only, donations in lieu, may be sent to either  
 Ty Hafan Childrens Hospice, St Hillary Court,  
 Culverhouse Cross, Cardiff, CF5 6EF or  
 British Heart Foundation, Greater London House,  
 180 Hampstead Road, London, NW1 7AW.

## Dorothy DAVY

Dai, Jean and families of the late Dorothy  
 Davy would like to thank all friends, neighbours  
 and relatives for their messages of sympathy,  
 cards, floral tributes and donations received  
 at this sad time.

The support by all that attended the service at  
 St Illtud's Church was sincerely appreciated.

**FAWCETT**  
**Jack**

Jean and family would like to thank the many  
 friends who attended Jack's funeral and sent  
 messages of sympathy and donations for Marie  
 Curie Cancer Care. We are grateful for the  
 kindness and support we have been given.

In particular, we would like to thank the staff at  
 Cowbridge Health Centre and the staff of Ward 10 and  
 A&E at the Princess of Wales Hospital for the care given  
 both to Jack and to the family, Canon Derek Belcher,  
 Norman Williams and David Boulton for the thoughtful  
 funeral service and the support they have given and also  
 W James Funeral Directors for their sensitive services.

**BAXTER**  
**Allan (Geordie)**

The family wish to thank everyone for their  
 cards and messages of sympathy following  
 Allan's death.

Also the staff of Ward 9, Princess of Wales  
 Hospital for their care while he was in hospital.  
 Thanks to all who attended the funeral and for  
 donations to Ty Hafan. Thanks to the Rev  
 Melanie Prince for taking the service, and to Park  
 Funeral Directors (Barry) for their sympathetic  
 and professional support at this sad time.

**McKENZIE**  
**Charlotte**

Peacefully on January 28th, Charlotte, beloved  
 wife of the late Fraser, loving mother of Carolyn,  
 will be sadly missed by all family and friends.

Funeral Service at Coychurch Crematorium on  
 Wednesday, 6th February 2013 at 1.15pm.  
 Family flowers only, donations in lieu may be sent to  
 the British Heart Foundation, Greater London House,  
 180 Hampstead Road, London, NW1 7AW.

At Charlotte's request no black to be worn,  
 bright colours please.

## GIBBS

## David Elwyn

Suddenly, but peacefully at home, on the  
 20th January, Elwyn of Llantwit Major. Dearly  
 loved husband of the late Dylis, and father of  
 Rhian and Simon, father in law of Paul and an  
 adored Boo-Boo of Elizabeth and Eleanor.  
 He will be sadly missed by family and friends.

Resting at W.A. Brown & Son, College Street,  
 Llantwit Major until the funeral service in St. Illtud's  
 Church on Friday 1st February at 2.00pm, followed by  
 cremation at Coychurch Crematorium at 3.15pm.

Family flowers only but donations may be made  
 to Ty Hafan c/o the Funeral Director  
 (cheques only please)

**DUNCAN**  
**John**

Died suddenly on 25th January 2013, John of  
 Llantwit Major (originally of Ayr, Scotland). Dearly  
 beloved husband of Karen, much loved and  
 devoted father of Gareth, Bethan and Rebecca.

Love lives on forever

Resting at W.A. Brown & Son, Llantwit Major  
 until the funeral service in Coychurch Crematorium  
 on Friday 8th February at 12 noon. Family flowers  
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# The Stagecoach students' success at LAMDA exams



**STUDENTS at Stagecoach Theatre Arts, are celebrating record results in their recent London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) examinations.**

The children who entered, aged from seven to 17, took an award in 'Acting' or 'Speaking of Verse & Prose' and all passed, maintaining the school's 100 per cent pass rate and consistently high marks.

The youngest students entered the 'preliminary level', while the oldest three students took their 'Grade 8 gold medal' - all achieving a distinction! The children were assessed on their performance, technique and knowledge, and received a certificate and written review from the external examiners.

Stagecoach principal Helene Reynolds said: "We offer LAMDA awards in addition to our weekly drama, dance and

singing classes. Students can choose to take a LAMDA award to gain an accredited qualification, with the higher grades gaining UCAS points for university entry.

"We are pleased Stagecoach can provide this opportunity for our local children, and delighted by their fantastic results."

For information about Stagecoach, contact Helene on 01446 781454. **HR**

# Pencoed work for victory

**PENCOED RFC recorded their first double of the season with this hard fought 25-18 win over a much changed Green Stars side at Little Warren.**

Pencoed scored in the opening moments, outside half Marc Davies placing a well judged kick downfield, and with left wing Richie Samuel putting the home defence under pressure, they made a hash of the clearance, for Samuel to kick on twice from 35 metres and win the race for an opportunist try.

Davies was again instrumental in Pencoed's second try, a deft grubber getting behind the Green Stars' defence for flanker Aaron Halse to regain possession, before Davies popped up again to make a half break, continued by Samuel who sent No 8 Gareth Prentice over wide out.

The home side hit back through their big pack, Chris Williams driving over, with Christian Roberts adding the extras before Roberts kicked a 50 metre penalty to level matters at 10-10.

Pencoed pressure at a scrum saw scrum half Tom Davies do well to work his way over in the corner.

The half time whistle sounded and despite

Pencoed having much the better of the half they only led 10-15 at the break. The second half opened with Roberts and Davies adding penalty goals respectively for Pencoed to lead 13-18.

Pencoed looked the more dangerous team out wide, however errors were creeping in to the Pencoed performance.

It was not until the 75th minute that Pencoed put some distance between the sides again on the scoreboard.

Once again the Pencoed pack did the business at a close up scrum for player/coach Aaron Halse to get the touchdown, Davies converting for a 13-25 lead going into the final minutes.

To their credit it was the Green Stars who had the final say with a try from Domenich Carroll, and Pencoed lived dangerously until the final whistle, but they can feel well satisfied with a bonus point win away

from home to retain fourth place in Division 3 South West.

A number of Pencoed players put their hands up for man of the match, both Davies and Howells in particular with good performances.

However the clubhouse vote deservedly went to Iuan Watkins, the former Welsh schools international, displaying an array of skills around the park, allied to some forceful carries in the loose. **TR**

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## Paying tribute to Merchant Navy's civilian heroes

**THE story about Barry's Merchant seamen by Jim Greenway, (The GEM, January 24) was a very poignant story that I would like to add to in some small detail.**

Merchant seamen were civilians, and on one ship that sailed from Barry which was sunk with all hands, the crew included two brothers aged 14 and 15, cabin boys.

Also in terms of losses, Barry suffered the most of all the wartime recognised ports. As they were under civilian contracts, the moment their ship was sunk, their pay was stopped and if it was sunk before 8am, the day's official start time, they lost that day's pay as well.

As many who were rescued could, and did, spend many days at sea, they would not get paid until they had registered for another ship. There was a registrar of shipping near the BBC studios at Llandaff, Cardiff. Films have been made about the sinking of the German battleship *Graf Spee* in the South Atlantic in late 1939, three months after the start of the war. This

ship had sunk many British merchant ships and had captured many of their crew. The Germans had transferred these seamen onto a ship called the *Altmark*.

After the *Graf Spee* was sunk, the *Altmark* was traced entering Norwegian territorial waters. At that time, Norway had not yet been invaded by the Germans and was still neutral. The *Altmark* intended to creep back to Germany through coastal territorial waters.

A British destroyer, *MHS Eskimo*, had been shadowing the *Altmark*. The *Eskimo*'s captain signalled back with this information. Good old Winston Churchill issued the famous order: "Go in and get them."

The destroyer crew boarded the *Altmark* with the famous cry: "The Navy's here!"

The crew were repatriated, some of whom had been prisoners for weeks. No pay for them until they had registered, unlike military prisoners of war who at least were paid backdated after the war.

I hope these little anecdotes may add to the inspiring story of sacrifice. **GERRY PARSONS, Barry.**

## It's all go at Porthceri!

**CANOLFAN Porthceri Centre is opening its 2013 programme in style with Jelly Roll Jones - 'purveyors of finest quality 20th century blues'.**

Jelly Roll Jones will host an evening in the St Francis Millennium Centre, Barry, on Saturday, February 16 at 8pm, tickets £5 on the door or from Dot on 07982319456 or dot.connell@virgin.net.

The band appeared at the 2012 Barry Arts Festival, and plans for this year's festival between May 24 and June 2 are well under way.

Canolfan Porthceri Centre are working in partnership with VOGA, Pukka Productions, Mike Duggan and others to present a diverse programme of events and community projects.

The festival team welcomes Sara Trickey, Ramon Goose and Adran D as part of the music line-up, and Prof Dai Smith, Menna Elfyn and Tony Curtis will head up the literature programme.

Tony Curtis will also premiere his new play *Augustus*, Gwen and Nina, and Cwmni 3-D will perform 'Heb fwg, heb tan' in a preview performance before the

Eisteddfod.

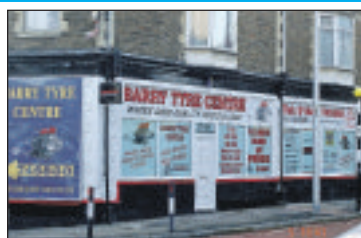
Choirs will be a strong theme this year, and Prof Gareth Williams will talk on the choral tradition in Wales.

Jeff Howard will lead another choral workshop and local community chorus Vale Voices will perform a programme of choral gems, featuring works by Bach, Mozart, Faure and Mendelssohn in the final concert on June 2.

Rehearsals start for this on Monday, February 25 between 5.45pm and 7.15pm in Trinity Church Hall - contact dot@porthceri.co.uk for more details.

Pat Temple-Murray, who co-ordinated last year's stunning wall-hanging, is running three projects this year - yarn-bombing, sculpture/modelling from recycled material, and another wall-hanging project, including one especially for Vale Plus.

For more details, including how to take part, go to [www.porthceri.co.uk](http://www.porthceri.co.uk), visit [canolfan.porthceri.co.uk](http://canolfan.porthceri.co.uk) centre on Facebook or contact [pat@porthceri.co.uk](mailto:pat@porthceri.co.uk).



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# LLANDOW KART CLUB'S CELTIC CHALLENGE

LLANDOW Kart Club brought the curtain down on its 2012 season with the traditional staging of the Celtic Challenge in the run-up to Christmas.

Although the field was down on the numbers seen throughout the regular championship, the club welcomed both estranged and unfamiliar faces alongside its stalwarts as it ran the rare combination of timed qualifying, two heats and a final for all classes except the Bambinos.

The youngest runners, Oliver Thomas, Shayne Clarke and Brooklyn Thomas, had some difficult conditions to contend with and, for their first two time trials, were, as usual, running on slick tyres while everyone else was on wets. Despite that, all drove extremely well and, after coping with mixed conditions later in the day, managed to achieve gold awards.

As usual, the Cadets produced the biggest grid of the weekend, with 14 runners, but the Comer section was dominated once again by Tom Rawlings, who claimed top spot in each of the four sessions. Max Fenlon was the closest opposition in the final, with Kieran Clarke some way back in third.

The Honda side of the grid was once again the stronger numerically, and shared the honours around, with Joshua Martin topping qualifying and heat one, before Stuart Ferguson



Tom Harvey (No.12) returned to Llandow Kart Club to sweep the Junior Rotax class at the Celtic Challenge. PHOTO BY HARDY RODDE



Matthew Ayres (No.58) claimed the Junior TKM battle at Llandow Kart Club's Celtic Challenge. PHOTO BY HARDY RODDE

came home in front of everyone third time around.

The final, however, went to Ethan Ling, who added to his third place in the main championship by beating Ross Thomas and Alex Rees to the flag and CC plate for 2013.

Echoing Rawlings' clean sweep, Ben Stevens continued his season-long domination of Junior Honda by heading every session ahead of a slim field.

There was a change in his wake, however, as Cristiano Nardone mixed it with perennial pursuers Thomas Croydon and Tom Ford, claiming runner-up honours in qualifying and both heats.

Ford found his form in time for the final, however, beating his rival to second place as Nardone completed the podium.

There was also a whitewash in Junior Max as Tom Harvey returned to his old stomping ground and showed the sort of form that has produced silverware on a national

level this season. The recently-crowned Continental Cup champion was unbeatable in all four sessions, eventually taking the Celtic title ahead of Rob Ellis and another returnee, Harry Williams.

The Minimax class once again rain with its sister class, producing another title for Jodie Handford, who saw off Lucas Wynne and Ceran Sokhi in the final. The visiting Andrew Wong had been the star of the early sessions, however, but was excluded from the final, while Sokhi also picked up a crucial two-place penalty in the main event.

Despite the absence of 2012 class champion Ross Chell, Junior TKM appeared to be going the same way, as Ryan Edwards topped qualifying and both heats, but WMKC interloper Matthew Ayres had other ideas and, having warmed up through the early stages, pounced when it really mattered, as Edwards was forced out of the action after just four laps. Ayres eventually came home

two seconds clear of Joe Phillips, with Yousuf Ashraf completing the top three.

Determined not to allow his rivals any of the seasonal silverware in Senior Honda, Simon Evans added the Celtic crown to his 2012 championship trophy.

It wasn't quite as clear-cut as it sounds, however, for both Nick Turley and the returning High Jones gave Evans something to think about during the day.

Indeed, Turley was the man to beat through qualifying and the heats but, despite posting the fastest lap, failed to make the podium in the main event as Evans came out on top ahead of Jones and Danny Griffiths.

Senior Rotax was a little thinner in number than of late, but still produced a well-matched field. There was no denying Daryl Henderson, however, as he made the most of the format to remain at the front throughout.

Josh Gray, David Entwistle and Dilip Singh gave chase, but in vain as the number 51 ran out winner by six seconds in the final. Entwistle and Singh completed the last podium of the year, while Simon Wheeler took 177 class honours from Nicky Coombs.

**RESULTS:**  
BAMBINO: Gold

Award, Oliver Thomas (Birel); Shayne Clarke (Topkart); Brooklyn Thomas (Birel).

**CADET COMER:** 1. Tom Rawlings (Zip); 2. Max Fenlon (Birel); 3. Kieran Clarke (Zip).

**CADET HONDA:** 1. Ethan Ling (Project One); 2. Ross Thomas (Wright); 3. Alex Rees (Zip).

**JUNIOR HONDA:** 1. Ben Stevens (7Kart); 2. Tom Ford (Biz); 3. Cristiano Nardone (7Kart).

**JUNIOR TKM:** 1. Matthew Ayres (Jade); 2. Joe Phillips (Jade); 3. Yousuf Ashraf (Jade).

**MINI MAX:** 1. Jodie Handford (Tonykart); 2. Lucas Wynne (Intrepid); 3. Ceran Sokhi (Kosmic).

**JUNIOR ROTAX:** 1. Tom Harvey (Tonykart); 2. Rob Ellis (Kosmic); 3. Harry Williams (Tonykart).

**SENIOR HONDA:** 1. Simon Evans (7Kart); 2. Hugh Jones (MS); 3. Danny Griffiths (MS).

**SENIOR ROTAX:** 1. Daryl Henderson (Gillard); 2. David Entwistle (Wright); 3. Dilip Singh (CRG).

**ROTAX 177:** 1. Simon Wheeler (CRG); 2. Nicky Coombs (Tonykart).

Best novice, Harry Cobbold (Senior Rotax); driver of the day, Ryan Edwards (Junior TKM).

**CRAIG LLEWELLYN**

## New running club is launched

**THE women-only club 'Women Running Penarth', is launching a Barry branch.**

The Penarth-based club, formed in 2011, now has more than 100 members.

Spokeswoman Elaine Jones said: "The new Barry beginners sessions start on Monday, February 4 at 7.15pm, meeting outside Morrisons, where new runners will receive a warm welcome from Jo (07776 316630) or Nic (07908 101130). "We welcome women

of all ages and abilities and are always pleased to hear from those who are new to running or perhaps returning after a long break.

"Women Running Penarth offers the opportunity for any woman to run in a supportive and safe environment, to challenge yourself physically as much or as little as you want and to meet other women who are interested in keeping fit and making new friends.

For further information, go to [www.women-runningpenarth.org.uk](http://www.women-runningpenarth.org.uk).

## Compact Chrysler manages to convey its own character

**A**MERICA is renowned for its enormous Cadillacs and other notorious gas guzzlers, but not with small, efficient hatchbacks.

Not until now anyway. The compact Chrysler Ypsilon, the chic French sounding five-door hatchback looks like a three-door, thanks to concealed door handles at the rear.

This cheeky little yank is actually based on a Fiat 500 and its appearance, mainly due to the bonnet and chrome grille, has hints of the larger Chrysler Voyager about it.

I tested the perky 1.2-litre petrol, finished in an attractive two-tone brown. There's pleasingly a lot of chrome on this vehicle – the chrome door handles are something you don't get very often these days, unless you're in the market for a Rolls.

Step inside and the first thing you notice is that there is no speedometer in front of the steering wheel, which is quite disconcerting, as you can see in the video at [testdrives.biz](http://testdrives.biz).

Instead, Chrysler has positioned it in the centre of the dashboard together with the rev counter. It might look eye-catching and means that whether it's a left or a right hand drive the speedo doesn't need repositioning, but I don't like it.

It is awkward to constantly look to your left to monitor your speed and particularly irritating when approaching speed cameras.

Aside from this, the interior is pleasingly comfortable and the seats are upholstered in really cosy velour.

It can be noticeably lethargic with a slight delay, reminiscent of the Fiat 500 funnily enough, and so when overtaking in any of the Ypsilon models, plenty of revving is required, but that's not a problem.

You'll also have to be prepared to change down a few cogs to complete the manoeuvre in a safe manner. Demanding drivers though, will enjoy getting the most from the engine and hearing the attractive note emitted when it's under pressure.

It handles varying types of roads proficiently and all occupants arrive at their final destination relaxed.

A little qualm is that the driver has to be careful where they place their hands on the steering wheel because of the angle of the stereo and telephone controls on the wheel.

### MOTORING with TIM SAUNDERS



Chrysler Ypsilon.

On a number of occasions, my right hand operated the telephone switches, cutting into the radio programme I'm listening to.

This eye-catching little American seems an efficient car, easily covering 500 miles on a tank of fuel. This is helped by the automatic engine start/stop function.

Parkers, the car experts, says: "The distinctive headlights sitting either side of the shield-shaped grille set it apart from the other, more generic hatchbacks and when you move around to the rear, the drama continues: the well-sculpted LED tail-lights at either side of the boot-opening give the car a unique, yet satisfyingly rounded rear end.

"The Ypsilon has certainly got a European

design (that's a good thing) and it's much more curvy than Chrysler's more sizeable hatchback, the Delta.

"The Ypsilon has the underpinnings of the Fiat 500 and the Ford Ka but it has a longer wheelbase (the same wheelbase as the 2012 Fiat Panda). So, it's a looker (of sorts) and should appeal to those after 'something different'."

Although its boot is large enough for a pushchair, the Ypsilon is perfect for the young, free and single as room in the back is a little tight, but its size makes it ideal for parking in tight spaces.

New price range: £10,695 - £15,695; Power: 69bhp; 0-60mph: 14secs; Top speed: 101mph.

Watch the video at [www.testdrives.biz](http://www.testdrives.biz)

## Entries open for world's biggest fundraising swim

**THE world's biggest fundraising swim is back for another year and Marie Curie Cancer Care is urging swimmers across Cardiff and the Vale to sign up for a new challenge for 2013.**

Held at over 600 pools across the UK from 26-28 April, the event sees thousands of swimmers challenge themselves through 5k, 2.5k and 1.5k individual challenges or Team 5k/1.5k challenges, while raising funds to help Marie Curie Nurses care for terminally ill people at the end of their lives.

Presenter, Tim Lovejoy and Swimathon president/Olympic gold medalist, Duncan Goodhew, launched the event this month with the unveiling of their Swimathon Squad.

Locally, people can take part in a number of sites, including Cardiff International Pool, Splott, Barry, Penarth and Llantwit Major

leisure centres.

Samantha Coles, community fundraiser for South East Wales, said: "Every year people across Cardiff and the Vale take on a Swimathon challenge and have a great time raising funds along the way. You can even choose to take part individually or as part of a team. This year we hope even more people will take the plunge and raise funds to help Marie Curie Nurses provide more free nursing care to terminally ill people in their own homes."

Marie Curie Cancer Care gives people with all terminal illnesses the choice to die at home. Funds raised by taking on Swimathon 2013 will help Marie Curie Nurses provide them and their families with free hands-on care and emotional support, in their own homes, right until the end.

Enter online for a Swimathon session before January 31, and you'll enjoy half price entry. Swimmer entry is open at [www.swimathon.org](http://www.swimathon.org) until April 24.

### ON AND OFF THE TURF with Brian Lee

## New venue for point-to-point course in Vale

**P**POINT-TO-POINT enthusiasts in the Vale will have a new point-to-point course to visit this season, as the Llangineir Hunt have moved from Laleston to Pyle – where David Brace has his Dunraven Stud Farm.

Unfortunately, though, the popular Bonvilston course which was home to the Penttyrch and Countryside Alliance (Wales) meetings has been lost and it is hoped that some time in the future hunt-racing will once again take place at what was a very popular venue.

The South and West Wales point-to-point season gets under way with the first of the two Curre and Llangibby fixtures at Howick, near Chepstow Racecourse, on February 24. However, before then, a number of Welsh riders and horses will be in action at the North Hereford at Whitwick Manor on February 16.

**Point-To-Point meetings:**  
February 16, North Hereford at Whitwick Manor; February 24, Curre and Llangibby at Howick near

Chepstow.

March 2, Duke of Beaufort's at Didmarton; March 3, South Herefordshire at Garnons; March 9, Brecon and Talybont at Llanfrynach; March 16, Curre and Llangibby at Howick near Chepstow; March 17, Ross Harriers at Garnons; March 17, Tivyside at Cilwendig; March 23, Glamorgan at Ystradowen; March 24, Ledbury at Maisemore Park; March 30, Monmouthshire at Llanvaypley.

**SPEED STEED**  
**SPEED STEED, a six-year-old bay gelding owned by Mr J H Frost and trained by Tim Vaughan at Aberthaw, was a 16-1 winner of the Coral.co.uk Mobile Betting Handicap over one mile and six furlongs at Wolverhampton last Saturday.**

Partnered by 7lb claimer Daniel Muscutt, *Speed Steed* won by three parts of a length from the 9-4 favourite Liberty Love in a field of ten runners.

You can e-mail your news or views to Brian Lee at [brianlee4@virgin-media.com](mailto:brianlee4@virgin-media.com) or phone him on 02920736438.



# RAVENS PROVE TOO STRONG FOR ATHLETIC IN CUP ENCOUNTER

**BRIDGEND** Athletic visited their neighbours the Ravens full of optimism after excellent performances against Neath and Pontypridd in the same Swalec Cup competition over the previous two seasons.

They also held a 2-1 advantage in victories, with one match drawn in previous league encounters before the Brewery Field side returned to the Premier League. They were also in good form with the limited games played since early December, having given Championship leaders Bargoed a close shave in their last outing.

However, on the day the much heavier Ravens pack destroyed the Athletic scrum and capitalised to run out well-deserved victors by 31-3 in the end.

The Athletic took an early lead, breaking out of their own 22 and making their way upfield. The Ravens were caught offside and outside half Steve Lewis kicked the penalty. Most of the half was spent in Ravens' territory - but the Athletic failed to

break down a resolute defence and were unable to secure any worthwhile possession at the set scrum, with the well drilled and heavier Ravens 8 often pushing them off their own ball.

The opening try came when the Ravens won a 10-metre line out and moved the ball. Former Athletic wing Rhys Jones came inside from the wing to cut straight through and cross for a try against his former team mates. Lewis Williams converted.

From the restart the Athletic were awarded a penalty which unfortunately Lewis sent wide.

The Ravens conceded a number of penalties which culminated in another Athletic old boy, No 8 Tom Morgan, receiving a yellow card. Again the Athletic failed to take advantage of both the resultant penalty and the time Morgan was off the field.

Morgan returned and promptly took the ball at a 5-metre line out to force his way over the try line in the corner. Williams converted to give the Ravens a 14-3 half time lead.

The scrum was again the Athletic's achilles heel in the second half and from a scrum close



Aled Thomas is tackled by a Ravens player.  
PICTURES BY GLENSPORTS

to the line, back row forward Andrew Yate forced his way over. The Ravens crossed for a fourth try when a poor clearance kick resulted in Scott Hicks racing along the touchline to cross unopposed.

The fifth try came when the Athletic defence, tiring from the onslaught of a heavier pack, saw Rhys Jones cut in from the wing to slice through for his second try of the match. Williams converted to see his side progress to

the second round. The Athletic wish their neighbours all the best in the following rounds.

In the Athletic pack prop Liam Griffin, hooker Simon Mustoe, lock Griff Davies and flanker Sean Williams tried really hard throughout against far larger opponents.

Scrum half Aled Thomas played well behind a beaten pack, particularly at the set scrums, full back Laurence Howley kicked well out of hand

and wing James Olds' defence was first class. The whole side, despite conceding five tries, tackled well - otherwise there could have been a cricket score in the second half.

Ironically, the two best players on the day were former Athletic players, No 8 Tom Morgan and wing Rhys Jones, who were directly responsible for three of the five Ravens' tries against their former team mates.

AB

## Weather decimates the chess fixtures

**WITH the poor weather conditions this week there have been numerous chess postponements, including the Quarks' home match against Pontypridd.**

The Bridgend team deserve plaudits for making their way to Caerphilly to play their

match at the height of the poor conditions last Monday.

For Barry we were left with one remaining match away to Cardiff. There was some doubt about the viability of playing this match due to the snow and ice but thankfully the match was completed with a satisfactory win for the Bosons by a score of 4-1.

Illness and the unavailability of another player weakened our team on paper but this also led to a first start in division one this season for Ken Hannah.

However, as we earned three wins and two draws, our team performed better than in the reverse fixture earlier in the season.

As our team normally plays in the order dictated by the current grading of the individual players this has meant that Steve Cunliffe is now able to play on board two.

He has remained unbeaten since the turn of the year so perhaps he feels less pressure to perform on this board. On the ten boards in our two matches this year we have obtained five wins, four draws and only lost on one board.

This has moved the Bosons into third place in division one - like the cream in a Victoria sponge cake sandwiched between the four teams representing the Cardiff club.

For more details visit our website - [barrychessclub.yolasite.com](http://barrychessclub.yolasite.com).

The Barry Chess Club meets each Monday at their home venue of The West End Club, St Nicholas Road, Barry, CF62 6QY with matches starting at 7:30pm; new players of all ages and standards are welcomed.

PJ

## Snow plays havoc with darts games

**THE snow last week played havoc with the Tuesday night darts matches.**

Only the game at the Hare and Hounds, of the five matches scheduled for January 22, was played. In that game the Hare and Hounds closed the gap on the Edmondson 'A' in third place to one point by defeating them 6-3.

League standings; Edmondson 'B' (53 points), Llanharry (49), Edmondson 'A' (46), Hare and Hounds (45), Farmers Arms (35), Carne Arms & White Lion (33), Cross Inn (30), Old Post Ladies (25) and Highwayman Inn (20).

On February 5 the semi-finals and final of the men's doubles will be

played at the Carne Arms.

In the first semi-final Simon Reader and John Izzard (Hare & Hounds) play Martin Thomas and Mathew Pay (Edmondson 'B'), while in the other Dai Thomas and Jonathan Cheal (Edmondson 'B') play Noyle Burt and Bill Foulds (Cross Inn). Also on that night, all rounds, including the final of the ladies doubles, will be played at the Edmondson Arms.

For further information and any enquiries please e-mail Paul at [cwbridgedarts@googlemail.com](mailto:cwbridgedarts@googlemail.com); up-to-date information on upcoming matches, league results and league table can be found on the website: [www.darts.apsn.co.uk](http://www.darts.apsn.co.uk).

PT

## PYLE AND KENFIG GOLF CLUB NEWS



Pyle and Kenfig Golf Club junior team.

## Presentation night a success!



ABOVE: Ella Griffiths (centre) with Barrie Edwards and Alison Evans.

**IN the depths of the wettest winter for many years, when golf is in short supply, presentation night at Pyle and Kenfig GC is an opportunity to come together and celebrate pleasant times just a few months ago.**

Introductions were by club manager, Simon Hopkin and the presentations were made by club captain Barrie Edwards, and ladies' captain Alison Evans.

The achievements of the juniors were fully recognised on the night and the Coates Merit Shield, for his contribution to their success, was made to Ian Booth for all his hard work.

No one, except Ian himself, was surprised at this prestigious award.

A new club champion, Carwyn Hammond, was

officially crowned while the many achievements of the ladies' club champion in events outside the club were read out, and young Ella Griffiths is obviously going places in the golfing world. The in-form Tom Furneaux received his prize as junior champion.

The convivial atmosphere of the night was enhanced by the well-known local singer Christine Black, who sang as winners' cups were filled with champagne and cocktails.

Of course, such cocktails act as lubricants in the reflections of the past year's golf and members appreciated that in spite of the weather, the course was always open due to its good drainage.

Contact Pyle and Kenfig Golf Club on 01656 783093/771613 or email [secretary@pandkgolfclub.co.uk](mailto:secretary@pandkgolfclub.co.uk).

JM

## Cardio tennis in Dinas

**FOLLOWING the success of tennis as an Olympic sport last summer, with Andy Murray winning gold and silver medals, Dinas Powys Lawn Tennis Club has been awarded a grant to run an adult fitness course in Cardio Tennis.**

No tennis skills are required but participants will pick up ball skills as they get fit with a cardio workout to music. Non-members are particularly welcome to take part every Saturday morning from 9am to 10am with no cost involved - just call or text 07909987359 to book a place for group sessions from February 2.

Children can also come along to join in mini tennis groups at a cost of £2 for non-members each Saturday morning.

NW



Sean Williams breaks through.

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# GEM sport



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**LEFT:** Welsh players take a break from training: Left to right: Wales captain Sam Warburton and squad members, Leigh Halfpenny, Toby Faletau, George North, Jamie Roberts, Mike Phillips, James Hook and Jonathan Davies. They are pictured alongside crew members of the 'new generation' Wales Air Ambulance, which could now have up to 300-plus emergency landing sites – thanks to a new WRU-backed scheme nominating rugby clubs around the country, which could accommodate the charity's life-saving helicopter.

**Top right:** Wales' 'Mr Indispensable', tight head prop Adam Jones.

**Right:** A new face, thanks to his grandad, Harlequins' Olly Kohn.



## Wales can use opener against Ireland as launch pad to end the depressing spiral of defeat

(...But time is long overdue to look at the role of the referee)

**S**O, here we go again...the 2013 Six Nations championship, whose outcome – even more than usual – is well nigh impossible to predict (though, in truth, it's an obsessive media practice that this column usually seeks to avoid!)

Picking an outright Grand Slam winner is particularly pointless, though, in a season that has been badly distorted by injuries and bedevilled by form and unavailability issues to an unprecedented extent – certainly in the case of Wales, who open their defence of the title they won last year against Ireland at the Millennium Stadium, on Saturday.

Any sober assessment of Welsh

chances of a rare back-to-back Grand Slam, is made doubly difficult, given that caretaker coach Robert Howley has opted to delay naming his starting line-up until later today, Thursday – just two days before the kick-off – proof enough of the selection dilemmas he faces, particularly up front, and the consequent need to keep the opposition guessing.

With the abrasive Irish pack reportedly licking their lips at the prospect of taking on a perceived weakness in the Welsh front five, all eyes will turn on Howley's team sheet today – in particular, the denuded second row, deprived of regular first choice players, and with question marks hanging over the match readiness of other familiar

names, both up front and behind.

An indication of this was the sudden introduction into the national squad of several promising, but untried players, and also the surprise enlistment from outside the squad on Friday of 31-year-old Harlequins second row, Olly Kohn, who (fortunately, it turns out) has a Welsh grandfather!

While it would be an exaggeration to view all this as proof of a 'crisis' in the camp, there can be no doubting the Welsh title holders' concern over the disruption to their preparations for a tournament that this year holds extra significance for all home nations' players, with the lure of a Lions' summer

### BACK PAGE COMMENT by Don John

tour in the offing. More importantly, there is the urgent need to arrest a worrying downward spiral in Welsh rugby that has seen the four regions fail (again) in Europe, and the national team lose seven of their last eight outings, including two 'whitewashes' by southern hemisphere teams – in Australia last summer and Cardiff in the autumn.

Thus, Saturday's Six Nations opener is a high pressure test in more ways than one, for both the players and the Welsh coaches – after all, Ireland have won 10 out of the last 16 clashes between these arch rugby rivals.

On the flipside, Wales can point to a 23-21 victory in Dublin last year, en route to their third Grand Slam in eight years, and also the ruthless 22-10 demolition of the men in green in the quarter final of the 2011 Rugby World Cup in New Zealand, following on the 19-13 Welsh win earlier that year.

Moreover, the record books reveal that they have won 65 of the 118 meetings, to Ireland's 47 – with six games drawn. This close-fought rivalry is borne out by the overall points totals: Wales 1,393 pts to Ireland's 1,260 pts.

The 'no-holds-barred' nature of these often stormy encounters between Celtic cousins was laid down from their very first clash on January 28, 1882 at Lansdowne Road, Dublin. The 8-0 result was

Wales' first victory on the international rugby field, in a match that one contemporary observer, in a masterpiece of understatement, said was "disrupted by disputes on both sides"...

The fiery tradition will no doubt be resumed this weekend, and as usual will need firm, but enlightened handling by the man with the whistle.

It is fervently to be hoped, then, that the result will not be determined by the kind of baffling inconsistency, both in terms of interpretation and implementation of the laws – which has been all too prevalent among big match officials of late.

With the professional game's current over-emphasis on brute, physical force, as opposed to flair and guile – reflected in an ever-rising injury toll – there are serious health and safety concerns that the game's administrators, who, after all, have a duty of care to players (employees), would do well to take heed of, to avoid potentially grave consequences.

They could start by taking a long overdue look at the whole method of control on the field of play, for the demands of today's professional game seem to put this task beyond the powers of one man to manage.

It surely calls for far more shared responsibility by all match officials.

Why, oh why, aren't the two 'Assistant Referees' more pro-active involved in the action, rather than do little more than wave a flag in the air occasionally, as did linesmen in the old amateur days?

They and the TMO – 'Television Match Official' (another impressive title with a limited function!) need to actively intervene, do as their job

titles suggest, and ASSIST the referee, who nowadays cannot be expected to see everything going on around him.

In this way, cynical, off-the-ball actions, so-called 'professional fouls' and other blatant (and not so blatant) transgressions, could be decisively dealt with on the spot – unlike during Wales' autumn series, when unacceptable acts of brutality went unpunished. (I don't mean the misuse of yellow cards, intended only for technical offences).

With four pairs of eyes, each given direct responsibility for monitoring various areas of play – setpiece, the tackle area, off-the-ball incidents etc, but with the referee, of course, having the last word – it could even dispense with the need for a citing commissioner!

As has been stated in this column many times before, we all accept that rugby football is, by its very nature, a physical contact sport – but it is NOT cage-fighting, or all-in wrestling!

It is, after all, supposed to be a sport suitable for family viewing, with a worldwide TV audience! (It would be interesting to know what readers think. Contact: don.john@tindlenews.co.uk)

For now, though, the spotlight turns to Cardiff at 1.30 pm on Saturday, where despite everything, the loyal legions of ever-optimistic followers hope that Welsh strength in depth will prove equal to meeting the Irish threat – and gain momentum for a return to winning ways, notwithstanding recent setbacks.

Who is to say, despite the doubters, that this confidence is misplaced? (SEE SPECIAL SIX-NATIONS FEATURE ON PAGE 15)

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